SHERLOCK HOLMES

by

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"Sherlock Holmes"

OVER BLACK.

A furious clatter of hooves approaching.

EXT. STREETS OF LONDON - NIGHT

Dark, icy streets seen through the sooty glass of a GAS STREET LAMP -- shadows within shadows.

Gas hisses audibly, the lamp ignites, casts a POOL OF LIGHT ...

... through which a TWO-HORSE CARRIAGE hurtles ...

... moving fast enough to keep pace with the street lamps as they ignite in sequence, as if the furious momentum of the carriage causes London to light up in its wake.

SUPERIMPOSE: "London 1891"

EXT. THAMES EMBANKMENT - NIGHT

Almost tipping over, the carriage turns onto the Thames Embankment, hurtles through the writhing fog along the icy river.

We catch a GLIMPSE OF A FACE scanning the embankment from under the canvas roof of the carriage, and then the carriage locks its brakes and fishtails to a hard stop. The steaming horses -- one black, one bay -- whinny and buck.

DR. JOHN WATSON leaps out, runs back through the snow along the embankment. Late 20's, early 30's, he is a wiry, sun-battered veteran of the Afghanistan campaigns, with eyes that have seen plenty.

CUT TO:

DOWN RIVER, two ponderous POLICE CARRIAGES make the turn onto the embankment, following Watson.

CUT TO:

Watson stops when he reaches a SINGLE SET OF FOOTPRINTS in the snow, vanishing over the edge of the Embankment, with no trace on the frozen snow-covered river ten feet below.

Watson's footprints partner the first set as he follows them to the edge.

CUT TO:

ANGLE FROM THE RIVER: Watson stands over a GAPING SEWER ENTRANCE in the Embankment wall.

INT. SEWER TUNNEL - NIGHT

Almost invisible in the gloom of the sewer we see the whip-like silhouette of SHERLOCK HOLMES.

Holmes raises his hand until his pistol is pointing straight up and fires a single shot; the instant he does, he drops to the ground and rolls sideways. He is very quick.

Two gunshots immediately ring out from the darkness up ahead, both slamming into the brickwork where HOLMES was standing; they are followed by six audible footsteps.

Holmes aims his gun towards the muzzle flash, counts six beats, shoots. A groan, and someone collapses. Holmes swarms his fallen target --

HOLMES
Where is he?

-- sees that the man is past answering. Then suddenly, far down the tunnel, we hear white-hot screaming. A woman. An ugly sound.

Holmes takes the man's bowler hat and places it on his own head, significantly changing his silhouette ...

... which melts into the blackness of the tunnel as he heads fast towards the sound of the scream.

INT. SEWER JUNCTION - NIGHT

Catwalks meet above an island of stonework at the junction of several sewers. A good place for bad things.

A YOUNG WOMAN lies on the stone island, a splash of white lit by flaming torches. She isn't screaming any more. Her eyes are wide, perhaps in shock, perhaps drugged.

PULL BACK to reveal that she lies at the CENTER OF A PENTANGLE painted crudely on the masonry. OCCULT SYMBOLS encircle her body, and demarcate each corner of the pentangle. Strange, disturbing, ancient shapes.

THE SHADOW OF A MAN (BLACKWOOD) kneels at the edge of the pentangle. Lips moving as he murmurs incantations, he moves to the next corner of the pentangle.

CUT TO:

ON THE CATWALKS ABOVE, THREE HARD MEN in bowler hats stand guard over this ceremony. They turn fast when they hear watery footsteps approaching from one of the tunnels.

Man #1 cocks his gun ... sees a figure in the darkness, bowler hat on head.

MAN #1
Dez?

A mumbled affirmative returns down the tunnel. Relaxing, Man #1 uncocks his gun...

... and is felled by a clinical right cross from HOLMES as he explodes into the junction.

Hard core hand-to-hand combat, one against three. The bowler-hatted men fight with fanatic intensity.

Holmes fights with cold control, using a lethal -- and very modern -- mix of martial arts, boxing and street fighting.

CUT TO:

Except for one quick glance up at the fight on the catwalk, Blackwood stays focused on his ritual, but murmurs faster.

CUT TO:

Holmes is now fighting just two, then one -- not realizing that there is a FOURTH BOWLER-HATTED HEAVY creeping down the catwalk behind him.

THE HEAVY draws his gun, to shoot Holmes in the back. CLICK! Sound like a billiard ball hitting a coconut.

Holmes whirls as the fourth heavy sags unconscious --

-- to reveal Watson behind him, brandishing a SHORT STICK (18 inch hardwood club).

The men share a look. For the first time, we get a clear look at Holmes' face. Holmes is shining, magnificent, wholly alive.

HOLMES
Excellent timing, as always.

CUT TO:

LORD BLACKWOOD rises from his knees. A few years older than Holmes and Watson, Blackwood radiates wealth and dark power. A formidable creature. His piercing eyes shine with reptilian anticipation.

He steps into the pentangle, stands over the woman. It looks as if this ritual is almost complete.

CUT TO:

As the final thug charges, Holmes swings off the catwalk, and -- CLICK! -- the thug meets Watson's short stick instead.

CUT TO:

Blackwood reaches down. His RUBY RING sparkles as he moves to caress her face --

-- and Holmes tackles Blackwood, driving him out of the pentangle.

BLACKWOOD
You spoiled it.

Something horrible happens behind Blackwood's eyes. A psychotic flash that brings Holmes up short, for a moment.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
No matter. The Dark One has the others. You weren't quick enough to save any of them.

The girl has snapped out of her trance, and is backing away from them as best she can.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
I wonder if you see their agony when you close your eyes at night.

The cruel words seemingly have no effect on Holmes.

But Watson charges at Blackwood, lays into him with his fists. Hammers him. Blackwood sags to his knees. Holmes grabs Watson, pulls him off.

HOLMES
It's over.

A bubbling, derisive laugh from Blackwood.

BLACKWOOD
Is it?

Holmes ignores him, sees something up on the catwalk.

HOLMES
Hello Inspector.

LONDON POLICEMAN swarm into the junction, lead by INSPECTOR LESTRADE, a man who makes up for any shortcomings with sheer doggedness.

LESTRADE
Thank you, Holmes. Thank you, Doctor. I wish I'd come to you sooner.

HOLMES
So do I.

Lestrade reddens and proceeds to handcuff Blackwood, to cover up his annoyance.

Behind them, the girl is helped onto a stretcher by two policemen, and carried away.

Blackwood watches the girl, eyes glittering.

BLACKWOOD
We'll meet again, my dear. I promise.

Watson lunges at Blackwood again. Holmes holds him back.

HOLMES
Turn your back on it.

WATSON
He killed at least seven women. How can you be so detached?

HOLMES
Emotion is the enemy of reason.

EXT. THAMES EMBANKMENT - NIGHT

Holmes and Watson walk along the freezing embankment towards their carriage.

WATSON
We should charge Scotland Yard for the help we give them.
(MORE)

WATSON (CONT'D)
Especially since they take the credit half the time.

HOLMES
Yes, but we have all the fun.

Holmes opens the carriage door and climbs in. He's done. Watson joins him.

The carriage moves away slowly, disappears into the winter fog.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LONDON - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Winter has become spring in the greatest city on Earth. Center of the Empire, birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, London is rich, fast, dirty and exciting.

Raw materials -- coal, iron, rubber, lumber -- stream up the crowded Thames and are transformed into luxuries and necessities. Everywhere you look, something is being built, or torn down to be re-built, bigger and better. Houses, stadiums, palaces, bridges, boats, trains.

Along with this modernizing clamor, we see the rebirth of spiritualism. Billboards for seances and mentalists, upscale astrologer offices "By Appointment to Her Royal Highness", palm readers on the streets, fakirs on soapboxes, shops selling Ouija boards, tarot cards and black candles.

Superstition and self-confidence combine to make Holmes' London the thundering city it is.

Everyone has something to do, somewhere to go, a fortune to make or break. Energy and optimism are the name of the game --

INT. 221B BAKER STREET - DAY

-- except in 221B Baker St., a big, messy two-bedroom apartment where Holmes languishes on a sofa, clothes a wrinkled mess.

Holmes is unkempt, unshaven, dull-eyed. Evidence of a long period of self-medication in the form of several empty whisky bottles under the sofa.

Unpaid bills are impaled on a bowie knife, which has been plunged into the wooden mantle over the fireplace. Bullet holes in the wood panelling spell out "VR", a drunken commemoration of Queen Victoria's birthday.

Art, animal skins and strange objects from the far reaches of the Empire abound. This is a bohemian bachelor pad, Victorian-style.

Holmes' eyes hardly move as WATSON ENTERS, carrying an exquisitely wrapped and tied SHIRT BOX.

WATSON
It's time to get up.

Watson is happy, cheerful and determined. The contrast between the two men couldn't be greater.

HOLMES
(sighing)
What's the point? Crime is ordinary. Life is ordinary. This world is ... ordinary. And I have no place in it.

WATSON
Oh come on, we've been through this before. You need another case, that's all.
(beat)
Blackwood dies tomorrow, by the way.

Holmes couldn't care less. Watson tosses the shirt box onto Holmes.

WATSON (CONT'D)
New shirts.

Holmes shoves the box aside, peevishly. Watson goes to the door, opens it, shouts downstairs.

WATSON (CONT'D)
(shouting)
A bath please, Mrs. Hudson. And some coffee. Strong.

HOLMES
Don't bother. Really.

WATSON
You promised to meet Mary tonight, and I'm holding you to it.

Holmes levers himself upright.

HOLMES
You wouldn't?!

WATSON
Oh yes I would. I've decided. I'm going to marry her. I want you to meet before I propose.

Holmes is quite literally stunned. This is the last thing he was expecting.

WATSON (CONT'D)
(pleased with himself)
I can't believe I've actually managed to surprise you. I thought you would've deduced it weeks ago.

Holmes shakes his head, no. As brilliant as he is, he's useless when it comes to everyday things like this.

HOLMES
But why get married?!

Now it's Watson's turn to be taken aback.

WATSON
Because it's what people do. Settle down.

HOLMES
Not necessarily.

WATSON
Ordinary people.

HOLMES
I've never thought of you as ordinary.

WATSON
That's exactly what I am. An ordinary doctor. I'm going to set up my practice and earn enough to lead a nice, normal life with Mary.

Now, Holmes almost looks angry.

WATSON (CONT'D)
Aren't you going to congratulate me?

Holmes levers himself to his feet --

HOLMES
Congratulations.

-- and stalks out.

WATSON
(calling after him)
Eight sharp, at The Royale.

INT. THE ROYALE - NIGHT

A romantic French restaurant in a fine hotel. Almost every table is occupied by happy couples, or groups. The kind of place you take the woman you want to marry to meet a difficult friend. Unless the difficult friend doesn't show up.

We find Watson and MARY MORSTAN seated at a table made up for three. Watson has run out of patience.

WATSON
We'll just eat without him.

MARY
Let's wait a little longer.

Mary is a pretty, well-turned-out woman in her mid-20's. Not spoiled, not silly, not ephemeral. A clear-eyed, modern woman -- with whom Watson is very much in love.

MARY (CONT'D)
I think it's important that I meet him.

WATSON
So do I. Evidently Holmes disagrees.

But a ripple through the room pulls their attention to the entrance -- where Holmes stands, looking out over the crowded room. He has shaved, he has dressed, his hair is overlong, but clean and corralled.

ON HOLMES as he looks across a sea of happy faces. He was more at home fighting in the sewer than he is in the Royale.

He finds Watson and Mary, and crosses the restaurant towards them, with the air of a wolf moving through a flock of sheep. All eyes on him.

Mary suddenly looks a little nervous.

WATSON
We'd almost given up on you.

HOLMES
(clearly a lie)
I had trouble with my tie.

WATSON
May I present Miss Mary Morstan.

Mary extends her hand.

MARY
I've heard so much about you.

Holmes leans down, takes Mary's hand, awkwardly.

HOLMES
And I ... um I ...

Holmes' failed attempt at small-talk becomes not-such-polite scrutiny. Still holding her hand, he examines Mary with a prolonged, acute gaze.

Mary shifts, doesn't know what to do.

Watson clears his throat. Holmes realizes what he's doing, releases Mary's hand immediately.

HOLMES
Yes, well ... I'm glad to see that you didn't punish your student today. It never worked on me.

Mary is stunned by Holmes' insight. Watson sighs.

WATSON
Why don't you sit.

But Holmes feels compelled to explain, not sit.

HOLMES
Watson told me you're a governess.

MARY
Yes, I am.

HOLMES
Your student's a boy of 8.

MARY
Charlie's 7, actually.

HOLMES
Then he's tall for his age. He flicked ink at you today.

MARY
(horrified)
Is there ink on my face?

WATSON
No, your face is perfect.

HOLMES
There are two tiny drops on your ear. Almost invisible.
(trying to soften the blow)
India blue's nearly impossible to wash off, anyway.

WATSON
Please sit down.

MARY
How do you know I didn't punish him?

HOLMES
Well, because --

And then Holmes notices Watson glaring at him.

HOLMES
-- perhaps I should sit down.

Holmes sits.

MARY
I'd like to know. Really.

Holmes shoots Watson an apologetic look, but he's in too deep to stop.

HOLMES
Your necklace and bracelet are matched South African diamonds from Asprey's, flawless. Not ...
(beat)
... not the jewels of a governess. The lady you work for lent them to you. She wouldn't've done so if you'd punished her son, not even if he deserved it -- human nature being what it is.

Mary is beet red with embarrassment.

WATSON
(angry)
Some human nature is unaccountable. In my professional opinion.

MARY
Well ... I did ask.

Holmes and Watson sit in silence. Watson's anger brings out the haughty worst in the detective. The awkwardness is rescued when the WAITER arrives with three menus.

WAITER
Mam'selle, messieurs ...

Watson and Mary read their menus together. Holmes does not. Instead, he looks at Watson and Mary deciding what to eat. They look every inch the happy couple.

Holmes looks around at the room.

HOLMES POV: happy couples eating, laughing, talking. Suddenly, Holmes hears no words. He just sees their mouths moving. The sound of silverware clinking and scraping on fine china rises to an orchestral roar.

WATSON
(sharply)
Holmes!

Holmes jerks back to reality.

WATSON (CONT'D)
Would you like to order?

The waiter stands, poised. Holmes discovers that he is sweating.

HOLMES
Perhaps ... Excuse me. My appetite ...

Holmes bolts, unable to stay in the Royale a second longer. Mary is visibly concerned.

MARY
Was it something I said?

WATSON
No, it was something I said.

OVER, WE HEAR the roar of a BLOOD-THIRSTY MOB and the MEATY THUD of a fist smashing into a face.

INT. BARE-KNUCKLE BOXING RING - NIGHT

Holmes staggers back from the blow. He tastes his own blood from a split lip. It interests him.

This isn't just a fight for Holmes, it's an exorcism.

He is stripped to the waist, all sinew and gristle. His opponent, McMURDO -- huge but flabby -- bangs his fists together and moves in.

Bets rage back and forth through the pressing crowd, deep in the flesh-pits of London.

Holmes' hawk-sharp gaze darts down from McMurdo's face to his muscles as they flex, giving him just enough warning to move his head so that a punch grazes him.

McMurdo throws a storm of punches, most of which Holmes ducks or blocks. He throws nothing in return, sometimes even drops his hand, just using his reflexes to protect himself.

Frustrated, McMurdo steps on Holmes' foot, traps him --

-- knocks Holmes down with a thunderous right.

GO IN ON HOLMES' BATTERED FACE, pressed into the dirt. He is <u>smiling</u>. This is just what he needed. This is his therapy.

Holmes rolls over, sits up, shakes his head to clear the cobwebs.

HOLMES
Thank you.

MCMURDO
For what?

Holmes gets up.

HOLMES
You won. Well done.

MCMURDO
Done? We're not done. Not until you can't move, pretty boy.

McMurdo advances on Holmes -- who backs away.

HOLMES
You don't want to do this.

MCMURDO
'Course I do.

HOLMES
Trust me. You don't.

MCMURDO
Shut your yap and fight.

His huge fist whistles past Holmes ear. Holmes sighs ...

... and DESTROYS MCMURDO with three blows, so quickly and so emphatically, that for a moment, the crowd goes silent.

Until Holmes gives them a shrug, as if to say "I tried". Then, the place goes wild.

EXT. BARE-KNUCKLE BOXING RING - NIGHT

Laughing, waving good night to fellow fighters and flirty barmaids, Holmes strides out of the boxing hall, battered outside, soothed inside. He has a BOTTLE OF BOOZE in his hand.

A PALM READER reaches out to Holmes.

PALM READER
Read your palm, sir?

HOLMES
I'd rather not know.

Taking a huge swig, HOLMES smiles to himself and strides off into the city -- *his* city, the place he's most comfortable: here, at face-value, where no explanations are necessary.

He passes a NEWSPAPER HEADLINE that shouts:

STEEL AND WEAPONS TYCOON LORD BLACKWOOD TO DIE TOMORROW. Blackwood Bridge contracts cancelled.

Holmes doesn't spare it a second glance.

INT. TOWER OF LONDON - BLACKWOOD'S CELL - NIGHT

Light from a candle. Blackwood sits like a yogi on the floor in the middle of the stone cell. His wrists are manacled. He is naked from the waist up. His HEAD IS SHAVED, his eyes are closed, his breath deep and steady.

Whether by tattoo or ink, he has OCCULT SYMBOLS all over his body (but not his shaved head).

The occult symbols are repeated on every stone in the cell. It is as if Blackwood and his cell are one. Spooky. Powerful.

Something moans in the air. Wind? Or something else?

Suddenly, Blackwood's eyes shoot open, his head raises. He springs to his feet, grabs a tin mug and begins banging it on the door.

The SOUND OF THE TIN CUP BANGING becomes the SOUND OF A FIST KNOCKING on the door --

INT. 221 BAKER STREET - NIGHT

-- of 221B Baker Street. The fist belongs to Inspector Lestrade.

LESTRADE
Open up! It's urgent.

The door is opened by a sleepy Watson.

WATSON
He isn't here.

Lestrade hands a PIECE OF PAPER to Watson. Whatever Watson reads on the piece of paper shocks him.

WATSON
I'll find him.

EXT. GREEN PARK - NIGHT

The SOUND OF DRUNKEN SINGING helps us locate Holmes. He staggers and serenades grumpy geese and swans with a POPULAR LOVE SONG of the time. The way he sings it, the edge to his delivery, makes it clear that Holmes has a very low opinion of love.

INT. BARE-KNUCKLE BOXING RING - NIGHT

The fighting is over. Only a few people cleaning up. Watson enters fast, looks around, leaves faster.

EXT. GREEN PARK - NIGHT

Holmes yodels the last few bars of his song, staggers backwards into a bush. He examines a leaf --

HOLMES
Ah *Pyrus Rosaceae*. So soft.

-- and goes to sleep. Watson shakes him awake.

HOLMES
Leave me alone.

WATSON
You're wanted at the Tower.

HOLMES
Some other time.

WATSON
There is no other time. You're Blackwood's last request. He says he has information he'll only give to you.

That gets Holmes upright enough for Watson to try and help him to his feet -- but Holmes brushes him off.

HOLMES
(staggering to his feet)
I can do this myself.

Holmes gets his bearings, lurches away.

HOLMES
Tell me something --

WATSON
What?

HOLMES
Did you propose to her?

WATSON
Not yet. Not until my practice is up and running.

ON HOLMES: the news that Watson hasn't proposed cheers him up enormously.

EXT. TOWER OF LONDON - DAWN

The horizon around the Tower is changing forever as the HALF-CONSTRUCTED MASS OF TOWER BRIDGE explodes out of the Thames, its metal skeleton hacking jagged lines into the sky.

Near ground level, workers untie and take down a BLACKWOOD STEEL sign.

Watson looks at the bridge as he and Holmes head for the Tower entrance.

WATSON
He's going to die in sight of the bridge he's building.

HOLMES
But not alone.

Holmes indicates A LONG LINE OF EXCITED PEOPLE queue for the execution. An equally LONG LINE OF FINE CARRIAGES assemble opposite them. Holmes and Watson bypass them all.

EXT. TOWER GREEN - DAWN

Inside the grounds of the Tower, on Tower Green, WORKMEN add the final feature to the platform they are erecting -- an EXECUTION BLOCK.

Holmes and Watson stop.

HOLMES
Hanging's not good enough for him?

WATSON
It's his right, as a Lord of the Realm.

If nothing else has sobered Holmes up, this grisly object does the trick.

HOLMES
Come on. Let's hear what he wants.

WATSON
He asked for you.
(beat)
I'll be here. I want to see this one through.

Holmes nods, and continues on alone.

INT. TOWER OF LONDON - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE BLACKWOOD'S CELL - DAWN

A pale and nervous GUARD leads Holmes down the corridor, past a number of empty cells.

HOLMES
Where are all the other prisoners?

GUARD
They were moved. For their own protection.

INT. TOWER OF LONDON - BLACKWOOD'S CELL - DAWN

Blackwood comes to the front of his cell as he hears their approaching footsteps.

He looks hale, healthy and excited -- not like a man about to have his head removed. He is dressed in his best. Except for the wrist manacles, he could be going to a party.

The guard backs away, crosses himself again.

BLACKWOOD
Sherlock Holmes, the great detective ...

Two powerful men posturing. Except that Holmes is battered and bruised, hung over, has a leaf caught in his collar.

HOLMES
What do you want?

Blackwood stares at Holmes intensely. Not at him, <u>into</u> him, doing to Holmes what Holmes has done to so many. Hypnotic.

BLACKWOOD
Come closer.

Almost without knowing it, Holmes takes a step closer.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
... closer ...

HOLMES
That's enough.

BLACKWOOD
I've been thinking about you.

HOLMES
I can't say the same.

BLACKWOOD
I want you to know that I respect you.

HOLMES
Again, I can't say the same.

BLACKWOOD
Don't take me lightly. Those who do suffer.

HOLMES
Well, you're about to pay for that.

Blackwood thrusts forward so that his face presses against the bars. He whispers:

BLACKWOOD
... Holmes ...

HOLMES
(getting annoyed)
What?

BLACKWOOD
Are you a patriot? Do you love Britain?

Holmes has a headache coming on like a steam engine.

HOLMES
What are you talking about?

BLACKWOOD
Did you know that I'm related to William the Conqueror, on my mother's side? He ruled London from here. From the White Tower, actually. And so will I.
(beat)
Our Empire has not reached its full glory. I'm going to change that. I have the necessary courage. So do you. History will reward us.
(beat)
Join me.

HOLMES
Join you? You're about to die.

A knowing smile creeps across Blackwood's face.

BLACKWOOD
Do you really think you could have caught me if I hadn't wanted it? If it wasn't pre-ordained? Yes, I'm going to die. But when I return, it will be with powers granted me by the Dark One himself.

HOLMES
Well, give him my best when you see him.

BLACKWOOD
I'll let you do that yourself. You'll be meeting him sooner than you think.

Pity for such obvious insanity shows in Holmes' eyes.

HOLMES
That's enough, Blackwood. I suggest you make your peace, rapidly.

Blackwood lunges at the bars.

BLACKWOOD
<u>I'm going to watch you die in agony! You and everybody else</u>!

Blackwood's psychotic ferocity is chilling. Holmes turns his back and walks away. If he weren't about to have his head chopped off, Blackwood would be a scary enemy.

INT. TOWER OF LONDON - MORNING

Holmes runs into Lestrade and a PRIEST, waiting to give Blackwood his last rites.

HOLMES
Double the guard on Blackwood, double the guard outside.

LESTRADE
Why?

HOLMES
Just a precaution.
(to the Priest)
I don't think you're needed,
Father. Not for this one.

EXT. TOWER GREEN - TOWER OF LONDON - DAY

The Green is packed with people -- many of them RICH AND ARISTOCRATIC. Excitement builds. NOTE the heavy security.

IN PASSING, we catch a glimpse of a dark, stunningly beautiful woman working her way towards the chopping block. Wicked eyes, wicked clothes. Seeing a man's head chopped off will not bother her in the least. This is IRENE ADLER.

ACROSS THE GREEN from Irene Adler, we find Holmes, just as Watson gets to him through the throng.

WATSON
Fancy crowd.

HOLMES
(disgusted)
Friends in high places.

WATSON
What did he want?

HOLMES
Absolutely nothing.

And then all conversation ceases, as the HUBBUB SWELLS from the direction of the Tower.

Blackwood emerges under heavy guard. Head held high, a superior little smile playing on his lips, Blackwood is led by TWO MEMORABLY POMPOUS OFFICIALS towards the execution platform.

Again, he looks like the cat that ate the canary, rather than a man about to be beheaded.

WATSON
He's taking this well.

As Blackwood is brought up the steps, a HERALD turns to address the crowd; Lestrade is near the front.

HERALD
Lord William Blackwood, for the crimes of multiple murder and human sacrifice in pursuit of Satanic rituals ...

The HOODED EXECUTIONER raises his axe behind him for a practice swing ...

HERALD (CONT'D)
...You have been sentenced to death.

... and the blade slams down into the block.

HERALD (CONT'D)
Is there anything you wish to say before sentence is carried out?

BLACKWOOD
Yes there is.

Flanked by edgy guards, Blackwood struts to the edge of the platform, looks out over the crowd with blazing eyes.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
Death holds no sway over me. I shall return.

The crowd shifts uneasily. The officials around Blackwood urge him to kneel, but he ignores them.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
And when I do, I will bring the powers of Hell with me.

The two officials try to get Blackwood to kneel before the block but he is having none of it. One of them urges the executioner to help, directing him to stand behind Blackwood.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
(struggling)
LONDON WILL BE MINE!

The officials finally force Blackwood onto his knees -- when a GUNSHOT RINGS OUT, the bullet thudding into the execution block, inches from Blackwood's head.

CUT TO:

Holmes and Watson turn towards the sound of the shot.

CUT TO:

A WOMAN emerges from the edge of the crowd waving a pistol, screaming like a banshee.

WOMAN
God's fury take you for what you did to my child!!

As the guards -- and Lestrade -- rush towards her, she FIRES AGAIN. The bullet whistles over the crowd. People hit the ground, screaming. (Holmes and Watson do not.) A moment of chaos --

WOMAN (CONT'D)
May he rip the flesh from your bones, and wrack you on the wheel...!

-- which ends when Lestrade rugby-tackles her to the ground.

CUT TO:

HOLMES
Now they can get this over with.

CUT TO:

THE EXECUTION PLATFORM. The executioner hefts his axe. The officials hold Blackwood head-down on the block, his shorn head spasming with fury.

The executioner raises the axe high above the block, and, with Blackwood’s final scream echoing over the crowd, the blade slams down and sigh of release goes over the crowd.

HOLMES
Let’s get out of here.

Somewhat disgusted by the whole affair, Holmes turns to leave -- and sees something that stops him in his tracks.

Watson follows Holmes’ gaze in time to see IRENE ADLER lift a challenging, provocative eyebrow at Holmes, across the blood-thrilled heads of the throng. She mouths the words “Hello, Sherlock.”

Watson whirls back to see the effect on Holmes.

Quite pointedly, Holmes turns his back on Irene and walks away -- but there is turmoil in his eyes as he does.

OVER, the sound of a SINGLE VIOLIN -- a simple, repetitive melody.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. 221 BAKER STREET - DAY

The same turmoil in his eyes, Holmes stares out at the rain from their second-story window and plays his VIOLIN.

WATSON (V.O.)
Instead of gazing out the window --

INT. 221B BAKER STREET - DAY

Watson circles an OFFICE FOR RENT notice in the newspaper --

WATSON
-- maybe you could put your mind to catching whoever's stealing horses.

-- then holds the front page up for Holmes to see.

ON NEWSPAPER HEADLINE: <u>HORSE THEFT RAMPANT IN CITY</u>

Holmes dismisses it, turns to watch the rain again. Watson joins him at the window.

WATSON
Forget her.

Holmes shakes his head.

HOLMES
You know, she's still the only one.

WATSON
The only one?

HOLMES
The only adversary ever to best me.

WATSON
That's not what I remember -- she tried to blackmail the King of Bohemia with an incriminating photograph, and you stopped her.

HOLMES
She stopped because she wanted to. She was three steps ahead of me all the way. Made a complete fool of me.

A wry smile comes to Holmes' face as he thinks about it.

WATSON
I hope you're not going to try and find her.

HOLMES
Now that would be a challenge -- she's always in the last place you'd expect.

IRENE (O.S.)
(European accent)
Good morning, gentlemen.

The both turn to towards the door ...

... and there she is, IRENE ADLER -- an exotic, dangerous, electric presence in 221B Baker Street.

Holmes shakes his head.

IRENE
You're looking older Sherlock. It suits you.

HOLMES
Something I can do for you?

IRENE
Introduce me to your friend.

WATSON
(irritated)
We've met before.

HOLMES
Dr. John Watson. Mrs. Irene Norton.

Irene extends her hand to Watson but looks at Holmes.

IRENE
It's Irene Adler again.

Holmes looks at her ring finger. Empty. Interesting.

IRENE (CONT'D)
Poor Norton simply couldn't keep up with me.
(to Holmes, pointedly)
But then, I've yet to meet someone who can.

WATSON
What can we do for you, Miss Adler?

IRENE
Please, it's Irene ...

Holmes and Watson stand together at the window, unmoved.

Irene gives a European little shrug -- so this is the way it's going to be? Okay.

IRENE (CONT'D)
I want you to find a business associate of mine. I pay well.

HOLMES
I'm not interested.

IRENE
His name is Frank O'Riordan. He's five feet one inch tall. Red hair. Missing two teeth in his lower right jaw.

They wait for more, but...

WATSON
That's it?
(to Holmes)
Well, unless he smiles at you in the street, it sounds like a waste of time, anyway.

Holmes speaks to Watson without taking his eyes off Irene.

HOLMES
She thinks she can tempt me by withholding information, while at the same time concealing her true intent.

Irene gives Holmes a dismissive little smile: yes, she can.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
She also thinks she can buy access to something she hasn't got -- the London City Police Records.

ON IRENE: score one for Holmes, there.

WATSON
What do you mean?

HOLMES
A man that height with the temper of a redhead is someone who starts a lot of fights. Messy ones, in public. Probably how he lost the teeth. She's betting that despite the fact he's in hiding, its a habit he won't be able to break.

IRENE
I never said he was in hiding.

HOLMES
You didn't have to. He's in London, but he's not where he's supposed to be.
(beat)
Who's after him? Besides you.

The clatter of arriving hooves in the street takes Watson to the window.

IRENE
Why ... *you* are, Sherlock.

Their gaze holds, aggressive, combative.

HOLMES
As I said --

DR. WATSON
(looking out the window)
The police.

HOLMES
(walking to the window)
-- I'm really not interested.

LOOKING DOWN ON STREET BELOW, they see a YOUNG CONSTABLE leap out of a POLICE CARRIAGE into the driving rain; he looks up, obviously heading for them.

HOLMES
(turning round)
Not after you already, are--?

But Irene is gone, leaving behind a SOFT LEATHER PURSE, heavy with coins. Both men look at the purse, neither touches it.

WATSON
She thinks you'll take the job anyway.

HOLMES
We'll give it to a charity for fallen women.

Before Watson can react to that, the YOUNG CONSTABLE hammers on the door, flings it open, panting.

YOUNG CONSTABLE
Mister Holmes, sir? Inspector Lestrade asks if you'll come to the Blackwood Estate, at once.

HOLMES
Tell him I'm busy.

YOUNG CONSTABLE
He ... he's gone.

HOLMES
Who has? Lestrade?

YOUNG CONSTABLE
Lord Blackwood, sir.
(breathless)
He's broken out of his tomb.

At last. The ennui, the irritability, the inner turmoil drop away and, once more, HOLMES BECOMES FULLY ALIVE.

HOLMES
Oh, has he now?

Galvanized, Holmes walks across the room to get his coat and a GUN, which he pockets. But Watson doesn't move.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
Come *on*.

WATSON
I can't. I have an appointment to see offices in Harley Street.

HOLMES
There are a thousand offices in London! But only one Blackwood.

WATSON
And only one Mary.

Holmes looks at Watson, Watson looks back. This is a big moment between them, and they know it. Watson tries to make it easier.

WATSON
Why don't we meet for lunch, afterwards? You can tell me all about it.

Holmes has no choice but to satisfied by that.

EXT. 221 BAKER STREET - DAY

Holmes and Watson emerge from 221 Baker street together -- but Holmes gets into the police carriage, while Watson opens his umbrella and heads in the other direction. Is this the beginning of the end of a great partnership?

EXT. THE BLACKWOOD ESTATE - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Judging by the magnificent estate, Blackwood comes from old money, and lots of it.

The estate is decorated with generations worth of ARTILLERY GUNS, stuck in various decorative places as if they were landscape art. Some are old enough to be covered in ivy, a few look new and very menacing.

We find the police carriage hurrying Holmes through the grounds towards --

EXT. THE BLACKWOOD CRYPT - DAY

Generations of wealth buried in a moss-covered marble edifice the size of a small house, set amongst overgrown landscaping.

Rain lashes against Holmes as the young Constable leads him past a leering gargoyle and points him towards Lestrade, sheltering in the open door of the crypt.

Holmes hurries eagerly towards a grim-faced Lestrade.

LESTRADE
Where's Watson?

HOLMES
Being ordinary.

Lestrade doesn't understand, but Holmes brushes past him, not about to enlighten him.

CUT TO:

INT. HARLEY STREET OFFICES - DAY

A LANDLORD unlocks and opens the door to DOCTOR'S OFFICES, ushers Watson in.

Watson enters the offices -- stops. The rooms are warm, wood-panelled, with leather chairs and anatomy charts. Ready to go, and nice with it.

Ordinary seems pretty do-able to Watson, right now.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BLACKWOOD CRYPT - DAY

Stairs lead UNDERGROUND, where the Blackwoods lie. Ornate and grotesque carvings suggest that Blackwood's obsession with the occult was inherited.

Light from police lamps show ranks of MARBLE SARCOPHAGI, with similar carvings.

The newest, whitest sarcophagus lies shattered on the mouldy floor. The coffin that was inside it is similarly torn apart. Lestrade stays close to Holmes.

LESTRADE
(whispering)
Blackwood's coffin --

HOLMES
No need to whisper. You won't disturb anyone.

LESTRADE
(a tiny bit louder)
-- it's been <u>smashed open from the inside</u>!

HOLMES
It looks that way.

Lestrade points up the stairs.

LESTRADE
The crypt door -- smashed open from the inside!

HOLMES
What are you suggesting?

LESTRADE
(a bit embarrassed)
I'm just saying that in twenty years of police work, I've never seen anything like this.

Dead bodies are business as usual for Lestrade. What's down here isn't. He's more than a little spooked.

Holmes nods, all senses in hyper-drive. He climbs the stairs. Lestrade stays with him.

LESTRADE (CONT'D)
You were at the execution. You heard what Blackwood said.

HOLMES
It's not possible. You know that as well as I do.

LESTRADE
So, who did this? And why?

HOLMES
That is the question.

This is meat and drink to Holmes.

LESTRADE
We know Blackwood started some kind of secret society --

HOLMES
The Order of the Golden Bough.

LESTRADE
-- with all sorts of top people involved. Cabinet ministers, even a Royal. Maybe some of them?

HOLMES
Maybe. These are superstitious times. Easy to see how someone could gain considerable power from pretending Blackwood was still alive.

Lestrade nods uncertainly, then stops at the crypt door, looks outside.

LESTRADE
I hope you haven't eaten recently. Someone's been busy with a razor.

EXT. THE BLACKWOOD CRYPT - DAY

In a small clearing next to the crypt, five or six POLICEMEN circle something they can't bear to look at ...

... the BODY OF A SMALL, RED-HEADED MAN, who has had his throat slit.

Holmes bends next to the body, a quizzical look on his face.

HOLMES
Hm ... red hair. Lestrade, may I borrow your pen --

Lestrade hands over a NICE FOUNTAIN PEN. Holmes shoves it into the victim's mouth, levers his cheek aside, to reveal:

HOLMES (CONT'D)
-- two teeth missing from the lower right jaw.
(to himself)
Didn't think I'd find you so quickly.

LESTRADE
What was that?

HOLMES
Nothing.

Holmes returns Lestrade's fountain pen. Lestrade doesn't want to touch his pen.

LESTRADE
Did you see he has no fingerprints? How can that be?

HOLMES
I've no idea.

LESTRADE
This is where Watson's so useful.

A look of annoyance flashes across Holmes' face.

Lestrade holds up a BATTERED POCKET WATCH, by the chain.

LESTRADE
This was in his pocket.

Holmes reaches into his own pocket, pulls out a JEWELLER'S LOUP, screws it into his eye, grabs the watch, flips it open and examines the lid obsessively for a moment.

HOLMES
Hm. A drunk and a gambler.

Lestrade has no idea how Holmes deduced that. Holmes shows him the watch.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
Scratches around the keyhole. Every drunk is the same. And pawnbrokers scratch the ticket number and their initials inside the lid. This one has five, so the owner made and lost money on a regular basis.

Holmes shifts his gaze to the face of the watch.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
Oh, and look!

LESTRADE
What?

Holmes looks up at Lestrade with the Loup still in his eye -- an unnerving sight.

HOLMES
It's time for lunch.

LESTRADE
How can you talk about food after looking at this?

Holmes flips the watch closed, pockets it.

HOLMES
This? It brings my appetite back.

Holmes strides away, energized, focused.

Lestrade looks around -- shivers. From the cold. Possibly.

EXT. LONDON STREET - EAST END - DAY

Holmes and Watson stride briskly along a busy East End street, eating piping hot FISH AND CHIPS out of newspaper cones.

WATSON
When I said lunch --

HOLMES
Come on, these are the best fish and chips in London.

Lots of people on the street and sidewalks, ranging from street merchants to low-lifes to out-and-out criminals. A ONE-EYED WOMAN charges a penny a go on her OUIJA BOARD, so that people can “Talk to the Other Side”. This is not a safe neighborhood --

-- as evidenced by a RAG AND BONE MAN’S STOLEN HORSE. Irate, he stands by his MAROONED CARRIAGE and waves the CUT ENDS OF THE REINS as he shouts at a FLUSTERED YOUNG POLICEMAN.

As all this plays out:

WATSON
You’re sure it was O’Riordan?

HOLMES
Absolutely.

WATSON
So Irene Adler’s mixed up in this Blackwood thing.

Holmes nods, deep in thought, gives the rest of his fish and chips to a cluster of STARVING URCHINS. One look at their eyes and Watson follows suit. They walk on.

EXT. BOW STREET - EAST END - DAY

Holmes and Watson turn onto Bow Street. EVERY SECOND SHOP IS A PAWN SHOP.

WATSON
She’s even more untrustworthy than I thought, if that’s possible.

HOLMES
Well, she’s a complication. Like all women.

Watson turns, to argue -- then sees a pretty young DAFFODIL SELLER, with yoked baskets of bright yellow flowers.

WATSON
Over here.

Holmes looks on with forbearance, as Watson takes a big bunch, pays and tips generously.

WATSON
(turning to Holmes)
They're Mary's favorite.

But Holmes does not want to talk about Mary. He has the Loup back in his eye, O'Riordan's watch open. He looks at the inside of the lid.

HOLMES
"M.H." is --

WATSON
Maddison and Haig?

Watson gestures, with a shake of his head. There was an agenda behind the fish and chips after all. MADDISON & HAIG, PAWNBROKERS, RESPECTABLE, DISCREET, are right across Bow Street.

HOLMES
(pleased with himself)
They should be able to give us an address.

Holmes launches across Bow Street. Watson goes with him.

WATSON
I'm going back to Baker Street.

HOLMES
Look at that.

Holmes points at a sign in the Maddison & Haig window: <u>LARGE SELECTION OF ENGAGEMENT RINGS FOR EVERY WALLET</u>.

That gets Watson in through the door.

EXT. MADDISON & HAIG, PAWNBROKERS - DAY

Seen through the dusty window, Holmes talks to the PROPRIETOR, while Watson looks over a tray of INEXPENSIVE DIAMOND ENGAGEMENT RINGS.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - CANNING TOWN - DAY

The streets in Canning Town are a cryptic tangle of cheap lodgings for cheap labour -- unsafe, unsanitary and unpoliced. Holmes and Watson move quickly through the crowds, Watson shielding Mary's daffodils from being accidentally crushed.

WATSON
I have to get going.

HOLMES
It's on the way home.

Holmes reads from the MADDISON & HAIG PAWNBROKER'S TICKET, stops, looks up at a LODGING HOUSE.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
This won't take long.

There's just no stopping Holmes once he gets the scent. And, if he's being honest with himself, Watson is intrigued.

INT. LODGING HOUSE - DAY

No-questions-asked, cash-up-front lodgings. Holmes and Watson wind their way up a twisting flight of creaky stairs --

WATSON
How do you account for O'Riordan's lack of fingerprints?

HOLMES
No idea.

-- and find two doors.

HOLMES
That's his. Look at the scratches on the keyhole.

Holmes takes out his knife, goes to work on the scratched lock.

INT. O'RIORDAN'S ROOM - DAY

Holmes pushes open the door and looks into a dank, gloomy room, CURTAINS DRAWN.

Watson sees an OIL LAMP on a rickety table -- lights it.

There is a NARROW DOOR on the far side of the room.

The room has been torn apart -- plaster and wood ripped out of the walls, spread around. FLOORBOARDS have been levered up or loosened. A BED FRAME leans crookedly against the wall.

WATSON
Someone got here before us.

As they cross the floor, the loosened floorboards jump under their feet. Holmes rocks a floorboard with his foot, sees the other end flip upwards.

HOLMES
I wonder what they were looking for?

WATSON
Holmes --

Watson points at a drawing on the wall -- an OCCULT SYMBOL. One we recognize all too well.

Then they hear FOOTSTEPS ON THE STAIRS.

Holmes pulls out his gun, moves to the door, opens it a crack, pokes his head out ...

INT. LODGING HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

... SEES FOUR ARMED MEN climbing towards them.

INT. O'RIORDAN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Holmes ducks back in the room and locks the door.

HOLMES
It's a trap.

Still holding Mary's daffodils, Watson rips open the curtains, tries to pull up the window --

-- and a BULLET SMASHES into the frame, fired from A CARRIAGE IN THE ALLEYWAY.

A successful trap.

FOOTSTEPS THUMP TOWARDS THE DOOR, as Holmes crosses to the narrow door, pulls it open, revealing a STEEP ATTIC STAIRCASE.

WE HEAR A KEY IN THE LOCK.

Holmes darts up into the darkness, Watson close behind --

INT. ATTIC STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

-- when a MASSIVE BLOW HITS the detective square in the face, throwing him back onto Watson. The daffodils go flying. They tumble backwards down the staircase --

INT. O'RIORDAN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- back into the room, in a heap on the floor --

-- where they are pinned by the FOUR MEN -- two on Holmes' legs and chest, one on Watson's legs, the fourth behind Watson's head, holding his arms.

Both are too stunned to struggle.

HEAVY FOOTSTEPS thump down the attic stairs.

A SQUAT COCKNEY BRUTE with piggy eyes and ham fists squeezes himself through the narrow door, CRUSHES THE DAFFODILS under one huge boot, stands over Holmes and Watson. This is DREDGER.

DREDGER
Didn't think you'd be this easy.

Dredger reaches down, tears open Watson's shirt to expose bare flesh. Then reaches into his pocket --

DREDGER (CONT'D)
(to Holmes)
Your friend is to proceed you into Hell.

-- pulls out a STRAIGHT RAZOR, flips it open to reveal a wicked blade still crusted with dried blood.

DREDGER (CONT'D)
And you are to watch him go.

As the razor descends, Watson thrashes futilely.

Holmes turns his head as far as he can from the sight, as if he can't bear to look.

MAN ON HOLMES' CHEST
Dredger -- he's not watching.

The razor halts, hovering above Watson's flesh.

DREDGER
He's to see *everything*. *Make him*!

The MAN ON HOLMES' CHEST puts his knees on Holmes' arms, lets go his wrists, grabs Holmes' head to force it round--

-- exactly what Holmes was trying for.

Holmes twists his body convulsively, levers him sideways, frees one arm --

-- jabs a crippling sword hand into the throat of the MAN ON HIS LEGS --

-- FREES ONE LEG, KICKS the rickety table --

-- and KNOCKS THE LIT OIL LAMP into the air --

-- SPILLING HOT OIL onto the MAN ON TOP OF WATSON --

-- WHICH IGNITES when the lamp smashes into him. SCREAMING, THE FLAMING MAN runs, thumps into Dredger --

-- who flings him off (putting out the flames), discovers that he is beginning to smoulder and flicker with flame himself. He beats it out with his huge hands.

Top half freed, Watson jackknifes upwards, smashes his forehead into the face of the MAN ON HIS LEGS.

Holmes PULLS A DRAWER FROM A DESK, SMASHES IT INTO THE FACE OF THE MAN ON TOP OF HIM, then finds his gun, whirls on Dredger --

-- in time to see the brutal cockney dive head first out of the window.

Holmes takes off out the door and down the stairs.

Watson goes to the broken window, looks out carefully (half-expecting a bullet) --

-- SEES DREDGER roll out of the PILE OF COAL that broke his fall and drag himself towards the alley behind the lodging house.

Watson picks up a fallen gun, sprints out of the room, leaving four men in various states of disrepair ...

... and one squashed bunch of daffodils.

Then, the SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS RETURNING and --

-- Watson darts back into the room, scoops up the daffodils, sees that every single stem is broken. Angry, Watson drops the bunch onto the floor --

-- and coldcocks a recovering assailant, as he sprints out.

EXT. ALLEYWAY BEHIND LODGING HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Dredger limps out of the yard, pulls himself onto the waiting carriage.

DREDGER
GO.

The DRIVER grabs the reins and takes off, fast.

Holmes hurtles out of the yard. He raises his gun to fire --

-- but has to dive for cover, thanks to a HAIL OF BULLETS from Dredger, firing the driver's gun.

Gun in one hand, Watson emerges from the yard in time to see the racing carriage reach the end of the alley.

The carriage turns to the right, away from the row of houses they have just left.

HOLMES
That's helpful.

Holmes kicks open the gate into the yard opposite, runs across it and throws his full shoulder-weight into the back door of the house.

INT. HOUSE - CANNING TOWN - CONTINUOUS

Holmes crashes through into the kitchen, shocking the WOMAN at the sink.

HOLMES
Excuse me.

EXT. ALLEYWAY BEHIND LODGING HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The carriage is forced to take another right turn, doubling back on itself, but on the NEXT STREET OVER.

EXT. NEXT STREET OVER - CONTINUOUS

Holmes bursts out of the house, next to a freshly delivered PILE OF COAL --

-- just as the carriage bears down on him. Dredger draws a bead on him.

Holmes ducks down into the yard, grabs the COAL SHOVEL and digs it deep into the pile of coal.

The carriage thunders past the yard at full speed.

Dredger's gun points right at Holmes' face for a second.

Holmes arcs the shovel round, hurls coal right into the face of the driver.

BOOM! Dredger fires, Holmes drops, the bullet almost parts Holmes hair.

The carriage slews wildly across the narrow street, the driver fights for control.

The carriage explodes against the opposite wall.

Dredger staggers out of the wreckage and limps away. Holmes stands, goes after him. Dredger looks over his shoulder, sees Holmes, accelerates.

EXT. HOUSE - CANNING TOWN - DAY

Watson runs into the street and sees Holmes disappearing round the corner at the end of the road, at a dead sprint.

EXT. STREET - CANNING TOWN - DAY

Holmes sees Dredger run through the gates into the huge THAMES IRONWORKS SHIPYARDS.

EXT. THAMES IRONWORKS - CONTINUOUS

Sprinting, Holmes follows Dredger through the doors into the nearest FABRICATION SHED --

INT. FABRICATION SHED - THAMES IRONWORKS - CONTINUOUS

-- into a wall of noise as TEAMS OF WORKERS panel-beat the enormous sheets of hull-metal into shape.

HOLMES PURSUES DREDGER AT FULL SPEED through the deafening chaos, weaving around gigantic metal panels (suspended from runners in the roof), hurdling the skin-ripping tangles of discarded metal on the floor, and bouncing off unsuspecting WORKERS.

EXT. GATE. THAMES IRONWORKS - DAY

Watson continues past the entrance to the FABRICATION SHED, runs along the outside of the building.

EXT. FABRICATION SHED - OTHER END - DAY

Dredger bursts out of the door and runs towards the FIRST SLIPWAY, which holds the PARTIALLY BUILT HULL OF A BIG SHIP.

But Holmes is right behind him, and Dredger's moment of hesitation -- trying to decide which way to run -- is enough to allow the detective to tackle him, sending the pair of them tumbling down the SLIPWAY.

EXT. FIRST SLIPWAY - DAY

Holmes and Dredger SLIDE TO A HALT at the bottom of the slipway BENEATH THE TOWERING HULL. They exchange scrambling punches as Dredger hauls himself backwards and finally kicks Holmes in the face. Kick like a mule.

Dredger is ridiculously strong.

Dredger ducks under the framework supporting the ship; Holmes staggers to his feet and follows, right under the massive craft.

EXT. FABRICATION SHED - DAY

Watson runs round the end of the building and looks down into the FIRST SLIPWAY ...

... where he sees Holmes dart out from under the half-built hull. He looks across and sees Dredger weaving his way through the support towers BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND SLIPWAYS.

Watson's sharp gaze continues across and up to the HEAD OF THE SECOND SLIPWAY ...

... where he sees a DIGNITARY finishing his speech on the CEREMONIAL PLATFORM FULL OF VIP's, who have gathered to launch a MASSIVE GREY BATTLESHIP.

Watson's eyes widen as he puts two and two together, and he sprints for the ceremonial platform at the head of the second slipway.

EXT. SECOND SLIPWAY - THAMES IRONWORKS - CONTINUOUS

Dredger comes out of the support towers under the battleship's hull, reaches a sheer stone wall. He turns back the way he came --

-- as Holmes launches himself at him. They tumble down onto the massive runners on the floor of the slipway.

EXT. CEREMONIAL PLATFORM - THAMES IRONWORKS - DAY

The DIGNITARY smiles to all around.

DIGNITARY
... and all who sail in her ...

EXT. SECOND SLIPWAY - THAMES IRONWORKS - CONTINUOUS

Holmes wrestles Dredger's head around onto the runner and pins him down.

HOLMES
Why O'Riordan? Why murder him?

DREDGER
That's what happens to traitors.

EXT. CEREMONIAL PLATFORM - DAY

A DIGNITARY'S WIFE -- A POUTER PIGEON OF A WOMAN -- RELEASES A MAGNUM OF CHAMPAGNE tied to a silken rope.

EXT. BELOW CEREMONIAL PLATFORM - THAMES IRONWORKS - CONTINUOUS

Watson turns and screams down into the second slipway.

WATSON
Holmes!!

EXT. HULL

The CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE swings through the air and explodes against the grey metal prow.

EXT. SECOND SLIPWAY - CONTINUOUS

Grappling frantically on the runners, both Holmes and Dredger look up as the HUGE CHOCKS holding the battleship in place EXPLODE BACKWARDS --

-- and the GIGANTIC PROPELLERS on the stern of the battleship start sliding down towards them.

EXT. CEREMONIAL PLATFORM - DAY

A scream goes up from the DIGNITARY'S WIFE as she sees what's happening on the slipway.

EXT. SECOND SLIPWAY - CONTINUOUS

VAST COILS OF CHAIN begin unwinding off the ship as it gathers speed, exploding onto the ground like artillery.

Dredger looks up at the approach of the huge propellers --

-- Holmes charges into him again before he can run, tripping him backwards across the runners. Dredger pulls Holmes down with him.

HOLMES
Who are you working for?

EXT. BELOW CEREMONIAL PLATFORM. THAMES IRONWORKS - DAY

WATSON sees the dwarfed, struggling figures of HOLMES and DREDGER on the slipway, then the accelerating ship obliterates them from view.

INT. SECOND SLIPWAY - CONTINUOUS

The noise is ear-ripping now as the keel gathers speed.

Dredger grabs Holmes by the collar and punches him directly into the path of the ship.

Holmes lies semi-conscious, eyes rolled back into his head, as the leviathan roars down towards him.

The ground beneath him shakes, bounces him, knocks his head against the runner -- once, twice -- and he blinks back into consciousness, sees the great shadow sweeping over him.

Holmes rolls sideways as the massive propellers slice through the air above his head and the gigantic hull screams past him like the side of the world being torn off --

-- and then the battleship's away, parting the Thames with a vast, frothy explosion of water.

Holmes watches the ship drift gracefully out into the river -- from the vortex to serenity in a matter of seconds.

His head collapses back, great gulps of air disappearing into his lungs. He tries to pull himself to his feet, but Dredger's bone-shaking punch has taken it out of him and he sags back to the ground.

Only when Watson arrives, does Holmes get to his feet. He staggers back to the slipway, to where Dredger was standing.

Nothing. No blood or trace. Nothing. He's gone.

Holmes and Watson exchange a long look -- this thing just got a lot more complicated and dangerous.

FADE TO:

EXT. NEXT STREET OVER - DAY

Holmes, Watson and various bystanders clear wreckage from the smashed carriage, to reveal the DEAD BODY OF THE DRIVER.

HOLMES
Now. Where've you come from?

Holmes kneels, begins examining the driver's shoes, slowly and carefully.

Watson gets to work searching the man's pockets.

This is something they've done many times before. They don't need to talk about it.

Watson pulls a PIPE out of the man's pocket, turns it back and forth, examining it.

ON HOLMES, as pauses briefly to enjoy Watson's involvement ... then turns his attention to the hem of the man's trousers.

HOLMES
Ah.

Holmes has found something in the man's trouser hem -- a small CLOD OF DRIED MUD. He breaks it into his fingers and feels the texture; he smells it. Then, Holmes tastes the dried mud like a connoisseur.

HOLMES
River silt mixed with industrial slag. Sulfurous.

Holmes looks at the soles of the shoes again, takes out his pocket-knife and picks something out of the tread, rubs it between thumb and forefinger with the air of a connoisseur.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
That, plus this fragment of ground coal in his shoes puts him squarely in Nine Elms, somewhere between Battersea Gasworks and the rail depot.

First generation CSI.

WATSON
An industrial area. That fits. Look at this.

He holds out the pipe to Holmes -- one side of the wooden bowl is blackened.

WATSON (CONT'D)
(mimes the action)
Lights it with a gas flame.

They examine it together -- it is really badly scorched.

WATSON (CONT'D)
But the only thing that burns gas at *that* temperature is a Bunsen burner.

HOLMES
Oh --

Something clicks for Holmes.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
-- a chemical laboratory. Or factory.

Which then sparks Watson.

WATSON
O'Riordan's fingerprints. Day-to-day handling of chemicals would remove them.

They're getting somewhere. This is what they live for. Watson catches himself -- he's not supposed to be doing this any more.

WATSON
I really should be heading home.

HOLMES
I need the Irregulars. Would you mind?

WATSON
Not at all.

HOLMES
Send them to Nine Elms --

Holmes turns to leave.

HOLMES
(over his shoulder)
-- they're looking for a chemical works that backs onto the river.

WATSON
Where are you going?

HOLMES
To work.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAB RANK, EUSTON ROAD - DAY

A KNOT OF CAB DRIVERS react as Holmes strides up waving a pound note. They are all pleased to see him.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAKER STREET - DAY

Watson summons the IRREGULARS with a loud whistle. WIGGINS, the oldest at 15, is the first to appear.

(The Irregulars are street urchins ranging from eight to mid-teens. They live short, dirty, unsupervised lives.)

CUT TO:

EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

Holmes talks to an OYSTER MAN, who points Holmes down the street.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAKER STREET - DAY

As the Irregulars tear off on their errand, Watson goes inside.

CUT TO:

EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

Holmes talks to a SHOP CLERK in the door of an EXPENSIVE DRESS SHOP. She nods, goes inside to fetch something for Holmes.

CUT TO:

INT. 221B BAKER STREET - DAY

IN THE BATHROOM, Watson washes his hands and face, wearing just his under-vest. As he dries himself, he sees something that makes him freeze --

-- an OPEN STRAIGHT RAZOR like Dredger's. His, or Holmes's.

CUT TO:

INT. FOYER OF IRENE'S HOTEL - DAY

Holmes bribes a SHORT BELLHOP and heads for the stairs in the Victorian equivalent of a discrete, expensive, BOUTIQUE HOTEL.

CUT TO:

INT. 221B BAKER STREET - DAY

Watson heads into the LIVING ROOM for a JOLT OF WHISKY.

He sits down, stares out the window -- a man caught between two people and two worlds.

OVER, THE SOUND OF KNOCKING ON A DOOR.

INT. CORRIDOR IN IRENE'S HOTEL - DAY

Holmes knocks on the door, bends his knees to mimic the height of the short bellhop.

IRENE (THROUGH DOOR)
Who is it?

HOLMES
(disguising his voice)
Bell'op wiv a package, ma'am.

IRENE (THROUGH DOOR)
One moment.

A brief pause, then the door is opened to reveal Irene Adler wearing a silk robe --

INT. IRENE'S ROOM - DAY

-- and a two-shot Derringer held low behind her hip. Holmes pushes in past her.

IRENE
No package? I'm disappointed.

Holmes is not in the mood for games.

HOLMES
What's your business with Blackwood?

IRENE
None of your concern.

Holmes looks around the room -- an explosion of perfumes and expensive European clothing.

HOLMES
I found O'Riordan.

IRENE
I knew you would.

HOLMES
He's dead.

Irene's composure wavers for a second. Holmes notes it with satisfaction.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
Killed by Blackwood's men, for betraying him. Was he betraying him to you?

Irene arches a cynical eyebrow at Holmes: it drives him nuts.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
What did you want from him?

IRENE
You don't really expect me to tell you that?

HOLMES
You'll tell me ...
(starts towards her)
... or you'll tell the police.

Which is when the Derringer comes out, aimed directly at Holmes heart. Irene smiles, cocks it.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
You're not going to shoot me.

Without taking her eyes off Holmes, Irene points the pistol at his foot --

IRENE
Oh yes?

-- and pulls the trigger. Crack!

Holmes leaps sideways, the bullet drills a hole in his shoe millimeters from his toe.

Irene cocks the pistol again. Holmes moves incredibly quickly, snatches it away with one hand, grabs her with the other --

HOLMES
I'm taking you to Lestrade.

-- which throws open her robe to reveal her underwear-clad physique. Perfect dimensions, indeed.

IRENE
Lestrade wouldn't know what to do with me.

Holmes is momentarily stunned by the magnificent sight.

Irene punches him full in the face, knocking him backwards.

She goes for the door, but Holmes grabs her and throws her backwards onto the bed; he stands, poised for her next move.

IRENE
You wouldn't hit a woman, would you?

HOLMES
I'm a firm believer in equality.

Irene rolls over off the bed onto her feet.

IRENE
How did you find me?

HOLMES
Beauty can be a disadvantage.

Their eyes lock together over the compliment.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
What's it to be, Irene?

She reaches out her left hand to caress his cheek --

IRENE
My dear, Sherlock...

-- and swings with her right, but this time he's ready for the punch, and he throws her back onto the bed again.

IRENE (CONT'D)
You seem to want me here.

HOLMES
You got the better of me before.
You'll not do it again.

IRENE
Maybe I want something different
this time.

She slides up the bed onto her knees, her face in front of his.

IRENE (CONT'D)
Is it to be this?

She slaps him hard across the cheek, then grabs his face with both hands --

IRENE (CONT'D)
Or this?

-- and kisses him passionately.

HOLMES
Ask me again.

She kisses him again, enjoying it more this time; they break --

HOLMES (CONT'D)
I'm still not sure--

-- and she whacks him across the cheek again.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
-- which one's the more dangerous.

He looks at her, eyes blazing as she wipes her lower lip with the back of her hand, and this time *he* kisses her, their passions rising.

As they break, Irene opens her mouth to say something ...

... and Holmes gives her a ringing slap across the cheek.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
Both have their pleasures.

She turns and slaps him yet again, but this time -- before he can react -- she tears open his shirt and grabs him to kiss him again, pulling him down onto the bed ...

SLOW FADE:

INT. IRENE'S ROOM - EVENING

Holmes and Irene lie semi-naked, sprawled across the bed. Close, intimate, tender. Holmes is as relaxed as we've ever seen him. Irene, too.

IRENE
I should have come back sooner ...

HOLMES
You've been much too busy.

IRENE
Hmm..?

HOLMES
Well ... the Tsar and his diamond. And then embarrassing the Aga Khan. And they'll probably shoot you on sight in Belgium, after what you did to King Leopold.

IRENE
(amused)
My name was never in the papers.

HOLMES
It didn't have to be.

IRENE
You've been busy, too. Your work with the naval treaty last year -- that was impressive.

HOLMES
That was Top Secret.

IRENE
Was it? I lose track.

HOLMES
No you don't.

Holmes rolls over.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
What did you want from O'Riordan?

Irene sighs: "Back to business".

IRENE
All right ...

She slides on top of him and sits on his chest.

IRENE (CONT'D)
... Since I like you.

She holds his wrists, pushing his arms up above his head on the pillow, lowering her face down to his.

IRENE (CONT'D)
O'Riordan had access to something my employer wants. He agreed to get it for me -- at a price. His death is a complication.

There is a sudden "click", and Irene leaps off the bed.

IRENE (CONT'D)
But that's what I get paid for -- the complications.

Holmes looks up ... sees his wrist handcuffed to the bedpost. Holmes pulls at the cuffs, then starts laughing.

FADE TO:

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Carrying an armful of laundry, a MAID slips a pass-key into a lock and opens the door ...

... to be confronted by the half-naked, snoring form of Holmes, still handcuffed to the bed.

Her shriek wakes him.

MAID
I'll -- I'll come back later!

HOLMES
Wait! Get me a screwdriver.

INT. 221B BAKER STREET - NIGHT

Holmes enters, to find Watson PACKING HIS MEDICAL BOOKS INTO CRATES. The sight brings him up short, for a moment.

WATSON
I thought I'd get this done while I had the chance.

Holmes says nothing, takes out his GUN and KNIFE, tosses them onto the table.

Then, he KICKS OFF HIS SHOES, throws them in a waste basket.

HOLMES
(going to get more shoes)
Anything from the Irregulars?

WATSON
Not yet.

Watson crosses to the waste basket, puzzled by the shoes.

CUT TO:

When Holmes returns freshly shod, he sees Watson examining his perforated shoe in a very Holmes-like way.

HOLMES
What are you doing?

WATSON
The last time I saw you, you didn't have a bullet hole in your shoe.

Holmes finds this tiresome. He takes Irene's handcuffs out of his pocket, tosses them on a cluttered dresser. Watson's eyebrows raise theatrically when he sees them.

WATSON (CONT'D)
Small caliber gun. A Derringer, I'd say. At any rate, a woman's gun.
(beat)
I know only one woman who'd actually *pull the trigger* ...

Holmes doesn't take well to embarrassment.

HOLMES
(grumpily)
I want you to know I got valuable information.

WATSON
Oh?

HOLMES
Whoever she's working for paid O'Riordan to steal something from Blackwood.

WATSON
Such as?

HOLMES
I don't know. But Blackwood's principal business is munitions, so --

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR interrupts.

HOLMES
Who is it?

WIGGINS
(through door)
Me, sir. Wiggins.

CUT TO:

WIGGINS is the oldest of the Irregulars.

WIGGINS
Stillwell Chemicals. It's the only one in Nine Elms. It's on the river. But they shut it down this afternoon. On account of the shindig they're having tonight. Big to-do. Bosses and toffs coming out of yer ears, according to one of the stokers. Some kind of celebration.

Holmes and Watson exchange a long look. This sounds promising.

HOLMES
Thank you, Wiggins. Good work.

Holmes picks up the PURSE FULL OF COINS IRENE LEFT, tosses it to Wiggins.

WIGGINS
Blimey!

HOLMES
Be fair with it.

WIGGINS
Easy to be fair with this much money.

Wiggins leaves before anyone changes their minds about the money.

HOLMES
Bosses and toffs. We'll have to dress the part.

Watson shakes his head emphatically.

WATSON
Not we. You.
(beat)
I meant what I said before. I need to get on with my life.

Holmes turns away so that Watson doesn't see his disappointment.

HOLMES
Suit yourself.

CUT TO:

Holmes strides down the hall, looking devastating in evening wear.

As Holmes walks past, Watson looks up from a crate of books.

WATSON
Good luck.

HOLMES
Luck has nothing to do with it.

Holmes crosses to the table to get his knife and gun. He PICKS UP THE GUN first --

-- then, making sure Watson isn't looking, PUTS THE GUN BACK ON THE TABLE, leaves, with a sly twinkle in his eyes.

ON WATSON as the front door clicks closed behind Holmes: staying behind feels strange. He dusts off another book, packs it.

EXT. NINE ELMS - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

An industrial area on a torpid bend of the Thames. Work doesn't stop when the sun goes down.

We see a vast GASWORKS belching smoke, glowing with furnace fire. Pyramids of coal and sulfur crowd the wharf area.

Next, a TALLOWS glistening with rendered animal fat.

Then, a FILTHY BRICK WALL, 20 feet high, topped with shards of glass. The wall goes on ... and on ... and on. A block long, broken only by a huge gate, closed.

Anything could happen behind these walls, and nobody would ever know.

This is the STILLWELL CHEMICAL WORKS. It says so on the gate.

EXT. CHEMICAL WORKS - NIGHT

ACROSS THE ROAD, deep in the shadows of a claustrophobic alley, we spot the movement, the shining eyes of two restless horses.

They are hitched to a very nice CLOSED CARRIAGE.

INT. CLOSED CARRIAGE - NIGHT

Dark. Holmes pulls out his watch, flips it open, angles it to catch whatever light there is.

Holmes settles in to wait.

CUT TO:

INT. 221B BAKER STREET - NIGHT

Face heavy with thought, Watson heads across the living room with another arm load of books, then sees something that stops him in his tracks --

-- HOLMES' GUN AND KNIFE, on the table.

ON WATSON: Decision time.

CUT TO:

EXT. LONDON - VARIOUS - NIGHT

CLOCKS RING MIDNIGHT all over London. A glorious cacophony ... but also the beginning of the witching hour.

EXT. NINE ELMS - NIGHT

As the last chime echoes and dies, another sound fills the night air. HOOVES AND WHEELS ON COBBLES, coming from all directions. Lots and lots of them. The streets echo.

INT. CLOSED CARRIAGE - NIGHT

Holmes sits up straight, pulls down the window and the staccato sound echoes into the carriage.

EXT. CHEMICAL WORKS - NIGHT

CARRIAGES APPROACH from every angle, homing in on the chemical works gate. Not just any carriages -- the equivalent of Rolls Royces, Bentleys, Mercedes'.

(NOTE: these are the same fine carriages we saw at Blackwood's beheading.)

The CHEMICAL WORKS GATE rumbles open and the carriages stream in.

INT. CLOSED CARRIAGE - NIGHT

A discreet rap on the door, it opens, WATSON PULLS HIMSELF IN, tosses Holmes' gun and knife onto the seat next to him. Watson is wearing his EVENING CLOTHES.

WATSON
You left these.

HOLMES
That was careless of me.

Holmes grins, unable to conceal his pleasure.

WATSON
This is the last time.
(beat)
I told Wiggins to get Lestrade if we weren't out in an hour.

Holmes reaches down, retrieves a SMALL CASE from under the seat.

HOLMES
We'll need this.

EXT. CHEMICAL WORKS - NIGHT

Holmes' carriage joins the back of the line into the chemical works, moving slowly.

Once they are through, the gate rumbles closed behind them.

EXT. BEHIND THE CHEMICAL WORKS WALLS - NIGHT

Behind the brick walls are ACRES OF WAREHOUSES, and enough outdoor space to hold all the carriages, plus mounds, piles, barrels of RAW MATERIALS.

ARISTOCRATS, CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY, MINOR ROYALS, disembark from the carriages and head for a central WAREHOUSE DOOR --

EXT. WAREHOUSE - CHEMICAL WORKS - NIGHT

-- guarded by TWO BOWLER-HATTED FOLLOWERS.

We recognize them -- they are two of Dredger's crew from earlier and bear the bruises to prove it. They scrutinize the guests as they pass.

Backs to us, HOLMES AND WATSON JOIN THE LINE into the door, wait their turn to run the gauntlet. They don't seem to realize the danger they are in.

Lambs to the slaughter.

ON THE FOLLOWERS as Holmes and Watson reach them. Sharp, aggressive eyes rake them ...

... and move on.

REVERSE ANGLE as Holmes and Watson saunter into the warehouse. We see their faces. They are HEAVILY DISGUISED -- one of Holmes' specialities. (Facial hair, aging, eye glasses, etc.)

INT. WAREHOUSE - CHEMICAL WORKS - NIGHT

Torches gutter from the walls, casting unreal light. The air is THICK WITH PALE SMOKE, which adds to the eeriness.

Music comes from a QUARTET OF BLINDFOLDED MUSICIANS.

People mill, quietly. The tension in the air seems amplified. No smiles, no laughter. As they look around, Holmes and Watson hear snippets of conversation -- every single sentence referring to Blackwood.

WATSON
Isn't that Sir--?

HOLMES
Yes.

WATSON
And that's the Royal--?

HOLMES
The entire membership of the Order of the Golden Bough, all in once place. Quite the celebration.

WATSON
(coughing due to smoke)
I've been to livelier funerals.

There is a focal point of people in the middle of the space. Holmes and Watson make for it --

HOLMES
Fear will ruin a party every time.

-- and find themselves looking down at BLACKWOOD'S FAVORITE OCCULT SYMBOL. Huge, slightly raised off the floor, the symbol is made up of the raw materials of the age: the black of coal, the white of lime, the red of iron, the yellow of sulfur. Like a giant sand painting --

-- and also the SOURCE OF THE SMOKE, which seeps out through it and billows around them. It is as if this symbol is a direct doorway to the underworld.

Holmes glances to his right, then looks with full force at IRENE, wearing an absolutely stunning evening gown. She turns towards him, slips her arm through his.

IRENE
I enjoyed this afternoon immensely, by the way.

HOLMES
At my expense. Again.

IRENE
You can afford it.

WATSON
What are you doing here?

IRENE
I never miss a good party.

Holmes laughs, then frowns, puzzled.

The OCCULT SYMBOL suddenly PULSATES, like a living thing.

THE MUSIC CHANGES TENOR, RISING SLOWLY AND RHYTHMICALLY TOWARDS A CRESCENDO.

The occult symbol writhes, alive.

HOLMES
Did you ...?

He turns to Irene.

HOLMES
... did you see that?

Irene turns IN SLOW MOTION to Holmes.

IRENE
(low, slow)
See what?

THE MUSIC PICKS UP A NOTCH.

Shocked, Holmes turns towards Watson. It takes forever.

HOLMES
Watson ..?

Watson turns, his image strobing in the flickering torchlight.

WATSON
(lower, slower)
... Whaaaaat?

Holmes opens his mouth to speak, but he can't. His eyes widen.

All around, movement and faces swim, whirl, strobe.

Holmes raises his hand to his mouth, bites down hard on himself. The pain brings him back, for a moment.

HOLMES
... we've been drugged; it's the smoke ...

THE MUSIC IS REALLY LOUD.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
... fight it ...

He grabs Watson's hand, Irene's hand, squeezes hard, hurting them.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
... fight it ...

SUDDENLY AN ECSTATIC SCREAM splits the air.

The music stops.

The silence is deafening.

It's clear that something big is about to happen.

The occult symbol begins to hiss and crackle, giving off clouds of acrid smoke that make everybody recoil.

Another otherworldly scream.

Fear verges into panic.

The entire symbol bursts into flames.

Everyone pushes backwards, chaotically. Women faint.

IRENE
(pointing)
Look.

Behind the flames, a form takes shape.

SOMEONE
He's here!

The form of a man.

SOMEONE ELSE
He has returned!

BLACKWOOD STEPS OUT OF THE FIRE, smouldering.

He looks bigger, brighter, more alive than ever before.

ON HOLMES: An expression we've never seen on his face before -- UTTER SHOCK.

BLACKWOOD
Kneel.

Everyone drops to one knee. Holmes, Watson and Irene half a beat late.

Irene looks at Holmes, Watson looks at Holmes -- but Holmes is still reeling. Bewildered.

WATSON
(whispering)
How can he be alive?

Holmes shakes his head. He doesn't know.

Blackwood starts to prowl and strut through the kneeling horde.

BLACKWOOD
Now. Are there any left among you who do not believe?

Utter silence.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
You!

He points to a kneeling man, who shakes his head. Blackwood moves closer to Holmes, Watson and Irene.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
(pointing to another)
You, perhaps?

Another petrified head shakes.

Blackwood takes a few more steps, stands right over Holmes, who keeps his head down, in shadow.

Blackwood points, not at Holmes -- at a WOMAN wearing an expensive gown just behind him.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
Stand.

The woman rises in terror. Blackwood stalks between Holmes and Irene, helps the woman to her feet.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
Do you believe?

WOMAN
(voice trembling)
Yes, my Lord.

Blackwood stares into her eyes, puts his hand to her face.

BLACKWOOD
No. You don't.

His RUBY RING sparkles as he caresses his hand down the side of the WOMAN'S face. Her eyes widen, suddenly and she sinks to the ground --

-- right next to Watson, who watches her spasm, and die.

People recoil. Fear and awe wash the room. Blackwood has them, every last one of them.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
The Dark One has returned me to you --

Blackwood stalks away, moving through the kneeling throng.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
-- with a great blessing.

Big VATS are brought into the kneeling throng by Blackwood's Followers. What looks like CEREMONIAL WINE is ladled out of the vats into cups, which are passed out into the crowd.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
Through His blood, I give you the gift of life.

A cup is thrust under Holmes' nose. He has no choice but to drink from it -- as do Watson and Irene.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
You are the faithful. You will be spared. But they will not.

Blackwood stalks towards the corner of the room and turns.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
London will be ours. And with it the Empire. A new Empire -- not this pallid, timid, partial thing we have now.

Blackwood pauses, radiant. The silence is profound. No one even dares to breath.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
By the power of the Dark One himself, I promise you this ...
(beat)
... today at noon the Queen will open parliament and every one of those decadent fools who call themselves her government will be in attendance. I will touch them all.
(beat)
The old order will be sacrificed to make way for the new.
(beat)
And we will demonstrate our new power to the world in such a way that they will tremble and fall to their knees before the might of the British Empire!

BOOOM! A LOUD EXPLOSION! A huge SEMI-CIRCLE OF FIRE erupts between Blackwood and his followers. The flames rush towards him, sweep in towards the wall ... and are swallowed up by the darkness.

Blackwood is gone. Vanished.

Leaving shrieking, shocked, milling, growing chaos behind him. People are trampled as the crowd floods towards the door.

Watson is pushed into Irene. They stumble over the body of the dead woman, look down at her.

IRENE
All he did was touch her.

Watson rips off his disguise.

WATSON
Where's Holmes?

They can't find him.

CUT TO:

Holmes is at the corner of the warehouse where Blackwood disappeared.

He feels along the floor for a trapdoor. Nothing. Then he lights a match, looks at the wood-panelled wall, examining the grain. He sees something --

-- pulls out his pocket-knife and scratches the letter "H" into a specific panel, then pushes on a KNOT IN THE WOOD.

INT. CORRIDOR - CHEMICAL WORKS - NIGHT

A HIDDEN DOOR pops open and Holmes slips through; but the top of the door hits a trip-switch as it opens, and the second "click" makes Holmes look up.

He sees the wire of a SILENT ALARM running along the roof of the corridor --

-- which means that he does not see Dredger standing right behind him, COSH raised high.

The cosh drops viciously towards Holmes' head.

SHOCK CUT TO
BLACK:

FADE IN:

INT. THE HORSE TANK - CHEMICAL WORKS - NIGHT

In a SEALED GLASS TANK the size of an Olympic pool --

-- we find ROWS OF DEAD HORSES, hanging upside down from the roof, suspended by their hooves.

EVERY HORSE IS BLACK. BLACKWOOD'S OCCULT SYMBOL has been painted in white onto the horses' flanks. Their long necks arch downwards, their tails and manes hang limp. As if this were not surreal enough --

-- each horse has a CURVED GLASS TUBE protruding from its swollen belly. The inside of these tubes is coated with a fine, clear, powdery residue. They join a MUCH THICKER GLASS PIPE, running between the rows of horses towards DISTILLATION EQUIPMENT.

INT. LABORATORY - CHEMICAL WORKS - NIGHT

This horrible vision is what HOLMES SEES as his eyes flutter open. He has been positioned to see it.

His disguise has been ripped off and tossed aside, his knife and gun are on a nearby lab bench, his hands are tied behind his back, and he has been propped on a lab stool.

Dredger holds him upright. A FOLLOWER keeps a gun on him, from behind.

The walls behind him are also thick glass, showing more darkened laboratories beyond.`

BLACKWOOD
I have a question for you.

Blackwood is every inch the victor.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
How does it feel to realize that everything you thought about the world is utterly wrong? To see your beloved reason and logic annihilated before your very eyes.

Holmes shakes his head, groggy, tries to clear it.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
Dredger, cut off his head.

Dredger is surprised, but pulls out his razor.

DREDGER
Might take me a while.

Holmes is starting to look distinctly nervous.

BLACKWOOD
Be careful of his face. That I may want to keep. Depending on his expression.

Dredger moves in with his razor.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
In the end, you were a poor match, Sherlock Holmes.

Suddenly, GUNSHOTS ECHO through the factory, over the rising SHOUTS FROM THE GUESTS and the blasts of POLICE WHISTLES.

Holmes smiles at Blackwood -- it's not over yet.

Blackwood loses his easy air of triumph. He turns to the follower.

BLACKWOOD
Load everything onto the boat.

The follower hurries down a staircase in the corner.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
Still enough time to enjoy you, though.

Dredger grabs a fistful of Holmes' hair, exposes his throat.

DREDGER
Brace yourself.

Holmes struggles. Dredger brings the razor around in front of Holmes' face, slowly and sadistically -- then lowers it to his throat.

CLOSE-UP: Holmes plants his feet firmly on the cross-piece of the stool --

-- which is when THE GLASS WALL EXPLODES INWARDS, the heavy BARREL that broke it flying into the room with the broken glass.

Blackwood turns and dives down the staircase.

Holmes pistons himself upwards, his skull smashing into Dredger's face. The razor shaves a section of Holmes' eyebrow as it jerks past his face.

Watson and Irene pick their way in through the glass, Irene takes aim at Dredger.

CRACK! Irene fires her little gun, just missing Dredger.

Dredger takes a quick look at Watson and Irene, then at LESTRADE AND THE POLICE POURING INTO the other end of the factory -- and takes off as fast as he can.

ON WATSON AND IRENE as they react to the horses for a moment.

HOLMES
Cut me loose!

Both Irene and Watson go to cut the ropes binding Holmes.

HOLMES
(to Watson)
Stop Blackwood. He's got a boat at the wharf.

Watson heads down the stairs after Blackwood and Dredger.

Irene saws at Holmes' ropes with her knife. They'll only be half a beat behind Watson.

EXT. WHARF - CHEMICAL WORKS - NIGHT

Dredger exits the chemical works, sprints across the wharf towards a black and red STEAM LAUNCH (a military prototype) where Blackwood and his core Followers wait.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER ANGLE

Watson exits, sees Dredger, and stops. The very sight of him shakes Watson -- but that doesn't stop him gathering his courage and charging across the wharf towards the steam launch.

EXT. BLACKWOOD'S LAUNCH - NIGHT

Dredger vaults into the launch. Blackwood covers him with a gun.

Watson charges into danger.

INT. CORRIDOR - CHEMICAL WORKS

Holmes leads the charge down the corridor, followed by Irene, Lestrade and half of the LONDON POLICE FORCE. They pick up speed.

EXT. WHARF - CHEMICAL WORKS - NIGHT

Holmes bursts out onto the wharf -- just in time to see Blackwood drawing a bead on Watson.

HOLMES
Watson!

Watson dives behind a pallet stacked with barrels.

EXT. BLACKWOOD'S LAUNCH - NIGHT

Blackwood's gun barrel tracks past Watson and finds the first of the GAS STORAGE TANKS.

EXT. WHARF - CHEMICAL WORKS - NIGHT

The crack of the shot is drowned by the almighty roar of the GAS TANK EXPLODING. The wharf is engulfed in flames.

CUT TO:

As the gaseous fireball rises into the night sky, Blackwood's steam launch pulls away onto the dark Thames.

EXT. STEAM LAUNCH - NIGHT

Blackwood stands in the bow, not bothering to hide. He truly seems invincible.

EXT. WHARF - CHEMICAL WORKS - NIGHT

Whether from the shock of the explosion, or the shock of seeing Blackwood alive, not a single policeman makes any kind of move to follow or stop him. They just watch him disappear down the Thames.

CUT TO:

DOWN THE WHARF:

FOLLOWER
You see! There's nothing you can do! Everything he predicted has come to pass! You cannot stop him!

CUT TO:

HORROR ON HOLMES' FACE as he pulls his jacket up over his head, and CHARGES INTO THE FLAMES, looking for Watson.

The wharf is a mess of flaming, smoking, smouldering debris. Holmes whirls this way and that, looking desperately for his friend ...

... but Watson is gone. Holmes stands there, fighting to maintain himself.

LESTRADE
Up there!

Holmes looks.

Thirty feet above the wharf, A FIGURE LIES TANGLED in the LOADING BASKET of a dock side CRANE.

Watson. He looks lifeless.

Holmes leaps for the CRANE CAB, works the controls to lower the basket. The second it reaches the waiting arms of Lestrade and his men, Holmes leaps out of the cab, runs for them.

Holmes pushes through, to get to Watson.

Police STRETCHER BEARERS arrive.

Clothes burned, hair singed, skin dark with soot or bloody with lacerations and punctures, Watson looks done for, but he groans when the stretcher bearers roll him roughly onto the stretcher.

The stretcher bearers move Watson down the wharf towards a waiting carriage. Holmes moves with them down the wharf.

They reach the waiting carriage. They load Watson.

Holmes is about to climb on, when Lestrade stops him.

LESTRADE
You're needed here.
(to the driver)
Get him to hospital!

The carriage takes off, with the stretcher bearers holding Watson down. Holmes watches them go. His face is wracked with emotion.

LESTRADE (CONT'D)
(losing it, a little)
I watched him die! They cut off his head! How is this possible?

Holmes turns, looks at Lestrade. His arrogance and jaunty self-confidence have been blasted away and replaced with guilt and anguish -- because he knows he manipulated Watson into being there.

HOLMES
I don't know.

Lestrade looks genuinely terrified.

LESTRADE
My men have been interrogating the guests. They all say the same thing -- Blackwood plans to kill the Queen and her entire government using his magic, and there's nothing we can do to stop him.
(beat)
Does he have the power to do that? Do you think it's possible?

HOLMES
I don't know.

LESTRADE
Well we've got until noon to stop him. Or God help us.

CUT TO:

INT. CHEMICAL WORKS - VARIOUS - NIGHT

Holmes strides into the NOW-DESERTED WAREHOUSE, past one of the VATS OF CEREMONIAL WINE, and towards THE BODY OF THE WOMAN Blackwood killed.

Light is low. The woman's body is just a shadow to us.

But not to Holmes. He looks down at her, lost.

He's vulnerable and human in a way we've never seen before.

A CLINK OF GLASS AGAINST GLASS jerks his head around.

Faint light and the shadow of movement comes from under a door.

Holmes pulls his gun, stalks towards it.

At the door, he pauses. Hears another clink of glass --

-- rips open the door, ready to fire.

INT. LAB ROOM - NIGHT

Irene puts down a THICK-WALLED GLASS SPHERE about the size of a cannon ball.

IRENE
Hello, Sherlock.

Holmes is astounded. Light from Irene's KEROSENE LAMP shows a shelf of glass spheres.

They look at the glass spheres, clear and beautiful in the abstract, obscure but disturbing as to their purpose.

Beyond her, a shattered wall gives us A GLIMPSE OF THE HORSE TANK.

IRENE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry about Watson. I hope he pulls through.

Holmes can't bear to talk about Watson.

HOLMES
What are you here for? What do you want with Blackwood?

IRENE
Now, Sherlock --

HOLMES
(harsh, rough)
No more games. If you know anything that would help stop him, this is the time to say so.

Holmes is ragged with emotion. His eyes are dangerous. They pierce Irene. She nods.

IRENE
Blackwood's family has manufactured weapons for generations. The kind of weapons that build Empires, that kill and maim on a grand scale.
(MORE)

IRENE (CONT'D)
There've been rumors in Europe of something new from Blackwood. Unconventional. Powerful.
(beat)
Magical.

She gestures at the HORSE TANK. The horses, the glass tubes, the metal curlicues of the distillation equipment, the clear powder. It's a vision from Hell. Its very existence makes Blackwood's power seem more real.

IRENE (CONT'D)
It appears the rumors were true.

Irene moves towards the door.

IRENE (CONT'D)
Now, if you don't mind --

Holmes gives her space. They are face to face in the doorway. Lots of complicated, impossible stuff in the air between, all of it overshadowed by Blackwood.

HOLMES
Where are you going?

IRENE
I don't want to be here at noon. Nor should you. Come with me.
(beat)
Or are you the kind of Englishman who has to go down with his ship?

One look into Holmes' eyes and Irene knows the answer.

IRENE (CONT'D)
Good luck, then.

HOLMES
Stay.

IRENE
Stay?

HOLMES
I --
(beat)
I find I work better with a partner.

A moment of consideration, then a tiny, regretful shake of her head.

IRENE
You need a partner you can trust. We'd betray each other, for all the right reasons.

Irene reaches up, kisses him. He is a statue.

IRENE
I'll see you again. I hope.

Irene leaves, as tough as she is beautiful.

Holmes watches her go, something like despair in his eyes.

EXT. LONDON - VARIOUS - DAWN

Holmes hurries through the streets of his beloved city as it comes awake. He has changed out of evening wear. Unsuspecting Londoners launch themselves at yet another day, full of hope and energy.

Holmes is agonizingly aware that, unless Blackwood can be stopped, these people will live and die in terror.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Holmes strides down the corridor, slows and lets his footsteps soften as he approaches Watson's room.

Holmes peeks in through the door --

-- and sees Mary sitting on a chair next to Watson's bed. Watson is asleep or unconscious. She holds his hand. Her eyes are closed. She is there for the duration, willing him better.

INT. WATSON'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Holmes looks on for a long moment. The sight pierces him. He knows he is seeing something precious, that he nearly destroyed.

Mary senses him, but as she looks up --

-- Holmes ducks back out of sight.

Then, we hear the SOUND OF HIS FOOTSTEPS RETREATING down the corridor.

Mary gets to her feet, moves quickly to the door.

MARY
Sherlock.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Holmes stops, face anguished. He'd rather face Dredger than Mary.

Mary catches up to him, and he turns to face her.

HOLMES
I ...

And that's all he can manage.

Mary reaches out, takes one of Holmes' hands in both of hers, looks him in the eye.

MARY
Sherlock, there's something I want you to know.
(beat)
I want to marry him, not diminish him.
(beat)
He has a generous heart. There's room in it for both of us. But not if Blackwood has his way.
(beat)
Do you understand?

Holmes nods, yes. Mary releases Holmes' hand.

MARY (CONT'D)
Stop him. Nothing else matters.

Strong words. Mary turns, marches back to Watson. Holmes watches her go and is puzzled by a strange new feeling -- admiration for an ordinary woman.

INT. SCOTLAND YARD - DAY

Lestrade is at the center of a storm of bobby blue, as POLICE RUNNERS enter and leave at high speed, underlings carry out orders, markers are placed on a huge wall map of London.

POLICE RUNNER
(out of breath)
Here, sir.

Lestrade takes the note, glances at it, hands it to the MAN AT THE MAP.

LESTRADE
Mark it.

A marker goes onto the map. Lestrade turns back -- sees Holmes approaching through the hubbub.

LESTRADE (CONT'D)
Any progress?

Holmes shakes his head, no. Disappointed, Lestrade looks at a wall clock -- 8 AM. He takes Holmes over to the big wall map.

LESTRADE (CONT'D)
We know he hasn't passed our dock at Limehouse Reach, to the east, and we know he hasn't passed Canary Wharf to the west. The boat has to be in this three mile stretch of river in between.

Lestrade hammers on the map, frustrated.

LESTRADE (CONT'D)
We've searched every dock, jetty, slip, ramp, hoist, berth -- twice. I've got men on the river, I've put everyone else onto the streets. I've authorized a reward.
(beat)
He's simply disappeared. It's just not --

Holmes shoots Lestrade a look, and Lestrade stops.

LESTRADE (CONT'D)
Come. It's impossible out here.

Lestrade leads Holmes to his own office, opens the door.

INT. LESTRADE'S OFFICE - DAY

Once inside, Lestrade shows the desperation he couldn't in front of his men.

LESTRADE
The Queen refuses to cancel the opening of Parliament. She says she won't be intimidated by a madman. She says she has absolute faith in her guards -- and Scotland Yard.
(beat)
(MORE)

LESTRADE (CONT'D)
I've searched every corner of Parliament. I've doubled the guards. I've done everything I can. But I'm at a complete loss.
(beat)
We have less than four hours until noon. I need one of your miracles, Holmes. More than ever before.

Pressure. Holmes says nothing.

LESTRADE (CONT'D)
You won't be disturbed.

Lestrade leaves, closes the door. Holmes goes to the window. Opens it, and the sounds of the city flood in. Holmes stands at the window, looking out at London.

CUT TO:

HOLMES POV: teeming, busy streets.

CUT TO:

ON HOLMES as he tries to think his way through Blackwood's maze.

BEGIN FAST, IMPRESSIONISTIC IMAGES FLASHES (ALL FROM HOLMES' POV):

- Blackwood's execution,
- Blackwood's tomb,
- Blackwood's resurrection,
- Blackwood killing the woman with his touch,

BOOM!

THE FLOW OF IMAGES INTERRUPTS on the gas tank explosion,
- on Watson hanging in the crane basket,
- on Watson carted off to hospital, more dead than alive.

BACK TO HOLMES, as he shakes his head, tries to make order of chaos ... and fails.

TIME DISSOLVE TO:

Thunk!

Holmes walks to the knife, retrieves it from Lestrade's office door, walks back, turns, throws ... thunk!

As he pulls the knife out of the door, leaving a mark ...

TIME DISSOLVE TO:

... hundreds of marks in the door --

-- which is opened by Lestrade, whose eyes flare as he sees the knife coming at him and closes the door --

Thunk!

-- just in time. The door stays closed. Holmes retrieves the knife, walks back for another throw.

IMAGES FLASHES:

- the woman killed by Blackwood's touch,
- the black horses,
- the glass spheres,
- the --

A LOUD KNOCK at the door rips Holmes out of his thought process.

Irritated, Holmes strides across the room, jerks open the door --

HOLMES
Lestrade! How am I supposed to --

-- and sees WATSON STANDING THERE, battered, bandaged, barely upright. Just getting there has taken an enormous effort.

Watson grins through the pain, holds HOLMES' VIOLIN.

WATSON
You'll need this.

They don't say anything. They don't need to.

Holmes takes his violin.

Watson leaves, closes the door.

Holmes scrapes the bow across the strings.

INT. SCOTLAND YARD - DAY

OVER, we hear the SOUND OF THE VIOLIN BEING TUNED. Lestrade glares at Watson.

Suddenly, a STARTLINGLY HORRIBLE CASCADE OF VIOLIN SOUND pours out from Lestrade's office, bringing the whole situation room to a halt.

Watson grins, pulls TWO WADS OF COTTON WOOL from his pocket, stuffs them in his ears, as the VIOLIN IS PUSHED BEYOND ITS LIMITS.

The violin is absolute torture for everyone but Watson.

A POLICE RUNNER BURSTS IN, spent, staggers as fast as he can across to Lestrade.

POLICE RUNNER
(panting)
Blackwood's launch. Heading up river from his estate. We're in pursuit.

Lestrade springs into motion, begins giving orders.

CUT TO:

INT. LESTRADE'S OFFICE - DAY

The violin music is becomes melodious, almost listenable. Holmes plays with his eyes closed.

WATSON
Holmes ...

Watson stands near Holmes.

WATSON
Holmes.

Holmes' eyes open, but he doesn't stop playing.

WATSON (CONT'D)
They've found Blackwood's launch, heading upriver.

Holmes shakes his head, closes his eyes and turns away, still playing, sweetly now.

IMAGES FLASHES:

- Blackwood stands tall in his launch, heading down river,
- Lestrade's wall map of the Thames,
- the headline Blackwood Bridge contracts cancelled,
- the workmen at Tower Bridge take down the BLACKWOOD STEEL SIGN ...

... repeat ...

- the workmen at Tower Bridge take down the BLACKWOOD STEEL SIGN ...

CUT TO:

ON HOLMES as he blinks, begins to come out of his trance a little, notes repeating on the violin.

THE BOW STOPS. Silence.

INT. SCOTLAND YARD - DAY

Scotland Yard is almost deserted. Watson stands painfully, in anticipation. Takes the cotton out of his ears.

Lestrade's door opens. Holmes emerges, drenched in sweat, eyes wide with neural overload.

HOLMES
If every place a boat could be moored has been searched by Lestrade -- then the boat is somewhere it could not be moored.

Watson smiles. He knows the signs. Holmes is firing on all cylinders again.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
What place on the river <u>that is not a mooring</u> does Blackwood have access to? Special access.

Watson thinks, then --

WATSON
Oh. Tower Bridge.

Holmes grins.

WATSON (CONT'D)
The bridge footings are huge. Easily big enough for a concealed dock.

HOLMES
And Blackwood's engineers helped with the design.

Holmes pauses, looks around, finally in the present.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
Where is everyone?

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE DOCKS - DAY

A FLOTILLA OF POLICE LAUNCHES can just be seen taking the bend at Waterloo Bridge, heading upstream at full speed.

CUT TO:

A small, fast POLICE LAUNCH waits for Holmes and Watson as they stride fast down the dock.

Holmes leads Watson onto the launch past a YOUNG POLICEMEN, who tends the gangway.

EXT. POLICE LAUNCH - DAY

As Holmes and Watson board, (the latter with a visible wince) the young policeman uncleats the bow line.

LAUNCH CAPTAIN
We'll need to hurry to catch Inspector Lestrade.

HOLMES
No, we won't. We're heading in the other direction.

LAUNCH CAPTAIN
But, Detective --

Holmes shoves the launch away from the dock.

HOLMES
(looking up at the sun)
As fast as you can, please.

The young policeman hops on board with the lines as the launch captain ramps up the engine.

Holmes and Watson head for the bow. It is a relief to both of them to have a clear direction. A solution. They allow themselves to drink in the magnificent view of London, for a moment.

The young policeman coils the bow line, just behind them.

Then, back to business:

HOLMES
Irene said Blackwood had a magical new weapon. Is it possible it's some kind of poison?

WATSON
You mean, the way he killed that woman?
(with a shudder)
I've never seen anything that fast-acting or vicious.

HOLMES
And, if instead of one person, you wanted to kill many ..?

Watson looks at Holmes with growing horror.

WATSON
Somehow, put it in the water. Or the air.

HOLMES
So, you see Irene --

Holmes lunges backwards fast as a snake, hooks the young policeman by the collar, yanks him towards them --

-- and blocks a punch he knew was coming. The young policeman's hat falls off to REVEAL IRENE, IN DISGUISE.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
-- it's science, not magic.

Irene pulls herself free, looks at Holmes coolly.

IRENE
How does science explain the fact that we saw Blackwood die a couple of days ago, and yet now he's more alive than ever?

Irene and Watson look at Holmes for an answer. He doesn't have one.

HOLMES
Your employer must be paying you a lot of money to find out.

IRENE
I'm insulted. I came to help you.

WATSON
In disguise?

IRENE
Does it matter? We all want the same thing.

HOLMES
Is that so?

IRENE
Yes, to stop Blackwood.
(at Holmes)
You said you needed a partner, Sherlock.

A look passes between Watson and Holmes. Did he really say that?

WATSON
She's too dangerous.

Holmes beckons the launch Captain.

HOLMES
Handcuffs.

The Captain approaches, hands Holmes some cuffs.

IRENE
You don't need those --

Irene reaches out, pats Watson lightly on the side --

IRENE (CONT'D)
-- you need me.

-- which just about doubles Watson over with pain, from his broken ribs. Point made by Irene.

IRENE (CONT'D)
Use me. I'm very good at what I do.

ON HOLMES: decision time.

WATSON
She tried to shoot you yesterday.

IRENE
And helped save your life today.

Holmes looks at the cuffs -- then puts them in his pocket.

WATSON
<u>This is crazy. You cannot trust her</u>.

Holmes looks Irene in the eye with harsh amusement.

HOLMES
Oh, I don't --

Holmes points at the high sun.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
-- but sometimes you work with what's available.

Irene smiles back dangerously.

IRENE
Don't worry Doctor -- it'll only be temporary.

EXT. TOWER BRIDGE - DAY

Establishing. Tower Bridge is a COMBINATION SUSPENSION AND LEAF BRIDGE, one of the marvels of Victorian engineering.

TWO MASSIVE STEEL SKELETONS face each other across the Thames, poised on top of huge CONCRETE PILINGS. These are the bridge uprights, or STANCHIONS.

A CONSTRUCTION CRANE perches on top of each stanchion, and reaches out across the river.

The stanchions are in the process of being linked across the top by a HORIZONTAL NETWORK OF STEEL GIRDERS, starting from either side of the river. At present, the GIRDERS ONLY REACH PARTWAY across the Thames.

The GAP BETWEEN THEM is SPANNED BY a seemingly chaotic tangle of ropes and RICKETY SCAFFOLDING, supported by the CONSTRUCTION CRANES FROM EITHER SIDE. Beneath them --

-- the middle section has TWO HUGE LEAVES that can be lifted with hydraulic pumps and MASSIVE COUNTERWEIGHTS inside the stanchions, to allow shipping to pass through.

Right now, the LEAVES ARE IN THE UP POSITION, almost perpendicular to the Thames.

Right BENEATH THE TOWER-SIDE LEAF, WE FIND THE POLICE LAUNCH, nosed up against the piling.

HOLMES IS IN THE BOW, banging on the concrete with a BOAT HOOK. He hasn't found anything.

HOLMES
It must be in the other one.

The launch takes off across the river.

EXT. POLICE LAUNCH - DAY

Holmes hammers ON THE OTHER PILING, faster and faster, trying without success to find anything other than solid concrete.

Desperation time.

LAUNCH CAPTAIN
That's it, sir. Twice around both sides.

Holmes lowers the boat hook.

HOLMES
He can't have vanished into thin air. It's not possible.

Irene shakes her head -- so much for Holmes's idea -- LOOKS UP AT THE BRIDGE SPECULATIVELY.

WATSON
The Queen opens parliament in half an hour.

Holmes nods, lowers his head, the very picture of defeat.

CUT TO:

EXT. BLACKWOOD'S LAUNCH - DAY

We find Lestrade in a similar defeated pose, on board Blackwood's red and black launch --

-- where two of Blackwood's bowler-hatted Followers are under arrest. But no Blackwood.

Lestrade smells something pungent, sticks out his finger, touches it to the side of the cabin. Wet paint. This whole chase was a decoy -- and it worked. Half of Scotland Yard are on launches surrounding the decoy.

Lestrade pulls his watch, looks at it, looks up at the sun, as if trying to will time to stand still.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT - DAY

Flanked by her mounted guards, THE QUEEN'S COACH approaches the Houses of Parliament. Magnificent ... and completely vulnerable.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE LAUNCH - DAY

Sun high over the Thames. Clouds moving in, wind picking up, weather turning English fast.

Holmes hasn't moved. If anything, his head is even lower, his eyes on the water lapping against the side of the launch.

LAUNCH CAPTAIN
I'll take us back to Scotland Yard.

Holmes doesn't reply. Watson nods.

The captain gooses the engine, throws them into a turn and accelerates.

As they pick up speed the launch rises out of the water, revealing the vertical measuring lines on the hull, below the plimsol line. (Lines which help gauge how heavily loaded the vessel is.)

ON HOLMES as he really focusses on the revealed lines on the hull ... and a brain-based electrical charge energizes him.

HOLMES
Wait.

Holmes raises his head, looks across the water --

-- turns to the launch Captain, points.

HOLMES
Take us there.

He's pointing at the TOWER OF LONDON.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
Now.

The Launch Captain red-lines the engine. Holmes whirls towards Watson and Irene.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
Over twenty feet of tide at this time of year.

They're right under the TOWER EMBANKMENT.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
Hide tide now, but not this early this morning.

Watson and Irene don't get it.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
(to captain)
Stop the boat.

As the engine howls into reverse and the launch settles hard:

HOLMES (CONT'D)
No better place to hide a boat than somewhere with an entrance that simply disappears.

As the boat stops, Watson and Irene see it --

-- the top of the arch of TRAITOR'S GATE, just visible above the rolling waterline, the bulk of the opening hidden under water.

WATSON
Traitor's Gate.

HOLMES
Yes.

IRENE
How appropriate.

Watson looks at the water -- and sighs. He knows exactly what Holmes has in mind.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT - DAY

Big Ben shows that it is ten minutes to noon.

INT. HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT - DAY

A JEWEL-ENCRUSTED MACE KNOCKS THREE TIMES on a huge door.

The huge door is opened from inside.

A CHAMBER FULL OF AUGUST MEN RISES TO THEIR FEET, to welcome their Queen.

As Lestrade pointed out -- the entire government of England is here, in one place.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAITOR'S GATE - DAY

Murky water laps the stone stairs down to the flooded gate.

Holmes, Watson and Irene appear from underwater. Stealthy, no splashes.

Deep in the corner, tight to the wall, BLACKWOOD'S LAUNCH. The real one.

Confirmation. Brief satisfaction.

Then they see the silhouettes of TWO BOWLER-HATTED GUARDS, upstairs and outside.

EXT. TOWER OF LONDON - DAY

The two guards don't stand a chance. Holmes takes out one, Irene the other.

Watson joins them. He's having trouble keeping up.

Holmes sees something that makes him smile grimly.

EXT. TOWER GREEN - DAY

Blackwood's Followers have their foreheads pressed to the grass.

Dredger watches them, a hyper-alert slab of malevolence. Around the perimeter, several BOWLER-HATTED THUGS stand guard.

Blackwood kneels at the apex of the arc, lips moving soundlessly as he summons the Dark One.

Something moans in the air. Wind? Or not.

Blackwood's eyes shoot open, his head snaps up and he rises to his feet as if some unseen power pulled him upright.

Blackwood glitters with cruel power and triumph. He is terrifying.

BLACKWOOD
The Duke of Devon, stand.

A FEEBLE, MINOR ROYAL staggers to his feet, shaking with fear.

Blackwood surges towards him, stops, fixes him with his reptilian eyes and places his right hand on his cheek.

The Duke of Devon almost faints.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
You will give the new Empire a royal face.
(beat)
Lord Cholmondely, stand.

An AUGUST NOBLE stands, terrified. Blackwood caresses his cheek.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
You will be Prime Minister.
(to the others)
The rest of you will be named to my Cabinet as needed.

CUT TO:

FROM CONCEALMENT, Holmes, Watson and Irene look on.

BACK TO:

BLACKWOOD
And I? What will I be? What does the Dark One want of me? King? Emperor? No, nothing so grand. I'm to be what I was born for, no more and no less.
(beat)
In our new Empire ... <u>I am the Minister of War</u>.

Blackwood stops dead.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
My first act is a necessary one, for without death, there can be no rebirth.

Blackwood turns slowly.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
Let us now open the Gates of Hell and begin our new world ... with the death of the old.

Blackwood faces the White Tower, eyes tilting up towards the top floor.

SMASH CUT TO:

Holmes and Watson share an urgent look.

BACK TO:

Blackwood raises his hands, and begins a chant in an ancient language.

The Followers look on in increasing terror.

Dredger's eyes dance with anticipation.

CUT TO:

Keeping cover between them and Blackwood, Holmes, Watson and Irene make for the White Tower.

INT. WHITE TOWER - DAY

The White Tower is a square tower, four stories high. TWO STAIRCASES in opposite corners lead to the top floor; one is made of STONE, one is made of WOOD.

Neither staircase can be seen from the other.

TWO BOWLER-HATTED THUGS GUARD THE <u>WOODEN</u> STAIR CASE --

-- HOLMES AND WATSON drop them from behind.

THEY HEAD UPSTAIRS, FAST.

Or, in Watson's case, not so fast. He falls behind. When Irene turns to look back, he waves her on, pauses to rest.

Which is when A BOWLER-HATTED THUG JUMPS HIM FROM BEHIND.

This isn't a fight. Watson is no match. He quickly finds himself staring down the barrel of a gun, about to die --

-- but the THUG JERKS, GASPS, sinks to the ground with IRENE'S WICKED LITTLE KNIFE sticking out of his back.

Irene swarms back down the stairs, retrieves her knife, and gives Watson a saucy shrug; aren't you glad I'm here now?

Watson acknowledges her point, stepping over the dead Follower --

-- which DISLODGES HIS BOWLER HAT and sends it rolling down the stairs.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWER GREEN - DAY

Sun, minutes from noon. Blackwood's countdown increases in intensity. Dredger looks around, sees movement as --

-- THE BOWLER HAT TUMBLES OUT OF THE DOOR AT THE BASE OF THE WHITE TOWER.

Dredger frowns -- then heads for the White Tower, fast.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE TOWER - DAY

AT THE TOP FLOOR OF WHITE TOWER, Holmes, Irene and Watson look at --

BARREL AFTER BARREL OF EXPLOSIVE, clustered together in a circle, each labelled:

BLACKWOOD MUNITIONS
HIGH EXPLOSIVE
BY ORDER OF THE QUEEN

Enough explosive to vaporize the top of White Tower.

There's a THICK GLASS CYLINDER about a two feet in diameter and four feet long, base wedged into the center of the barrels. It is sealed with a STAINLESS STEEL LID LOCKED to the glass.

They move closer. Light from a nearby window illuminates the glass cylinder so that the contents can be seen clearly.

At the top of the glass cylinder: cogs, springs, flywheels, all in motion. Whirring movement, ominous ticking. A CLOCK-FACE WITH A RED SWEEP reads THREE MINUTES TO NOON.

Beneath the applied watchmaking, half of the cylinder is packed with a soft, grey, ugly paste. Cordite detonator.

Below the cordite, is THICK GLASS SPHERE like those we saw at Blackwood's factory. It is full of THE CLEAR POWDER FROM THE HORSE TANK.

HOLMES
Blackwood's weapon.

WATSON
It was incubated in the bodies of the horses. It's biological.

They're beginning to understand the horror of what they're looking at.

IRENE
How does it work?

WATSON
The blast will spread the particles into the atmosphere for miles around. Anyone breathing them in will end up like the woman at the factory.

IRENE
Everyone in the Parliament building --

WATSON
(grim)
And everyone else within the radius of the blast.

Their faces show how staggered they are.

WATSON (CONT'D)
Thousands of innocent people.

Two and half minutes.

THE SOUND OF HEAVY FOOTSTEPS clatters up towards them UP BOTH STAIRWAYS.

HOLMES
(to Irene)
Can you pick the lock?

In response, Irene reaches up to her hair, pulls out TWO LONG, THIN HAIR PINS and starts to climb ONTO THE BARRELS OF HIGH EXPLOSIVE. Watson grabs her arm.

WATSON
Wait! See those two springs. That's a motion sensor. Any sharp movement...

IRENE nods, takes a deep breath, slides onto the barrels of explosive and steps gingerly towards the glass sphere. A gut-clenching perch.

HOLMES LOCKS THE THICK DOOR at the top of the wooden stairs.

The stone stairs have no door. Holmes joins Watson. They pull their revolvers, take shelter on either side of the doorway.

WATSON (CONT'D)
I've only got six shots.

HOLMES
(with a grin)
Then we're in trouble if there are more than twelve.

THE FIRST OF THE BOWLER-HATTED THUGS CHARGE up at them.

Holmes and Watson fire down with disciplined shots.

FOLLOW THE FIRST SHOT THUG AS HE TUMBLES DOWNSTAIRS --

-- to find AT LEAST TWENTY MORE waiting to take his place, with Dredger commanding them.

DREDGER
Keep going!

DREDGER RUNS for the wooden stairs, bounds up them until he reaches the locked door.

He raises his huge foot, kicks at the door. No go. It'll take a siege engine.

He pivots, kicks out the window, squeezes himself out of it and swings sideways.

CUT TO:

Irene leans right over the glass cylinder and starts to pick the lock.

CUT TO:

A brief pause as the thugs pull the dead and wounded out of the way.

HOLMES
How many shots left?

WATSON
Three.

Both men look around the top floor. Nothing but a couple of SUITS OF ARMOR and a SMALL CEREMONIAL CANNON, on wheels, that hasn't been fired in at least a century.

HOLMES
Irene?

Last sun streaming in helps. Irene works her hair pins deftly. Click!

IRENE
Got it.

Then the sunlight is eclipsed --

-- by Dredger's body, as he CRASHES IN THROUGH THE WINDOW, rolls to his feet, opens his RAZOR and HEADS STRAIGHT FOR IRENE.

Holmes tosses his gun to Watson, launches himself across the room at Dredger --

HOLMES
(to Irene)
Don't stop!

-- and hits the huge Cockney with the THREE-PUNCH SEQUENCE THAT DROPPED MCMURDO in his tracks earlier.

DREDGER GRINS, LUNGES AT HOLMES with the razor. Holmes dances back out of reach.

THE CHARGE FROM BELOW RESUMES. Watson fires both guns, husbanding his bullets.

IRENE OPENS THE STAINLESS STEEL LID, and stares in at a maze of cogs, springs and flywheels -- which keep ticking.

A RED SWEEP ON THE TIMER GIVES THEM ABOUT A MINUTE.

Holmes vs. Dredger. This is a brutal, visceral fight. Dredger is stronger, Holmes is more skilled. Dredger has his beloved razor. Every time we look at Holmes, he has another ruby stripe from a near-miss. After Holmes ducks under a razor-slash and thuds a side-kick against Dredger's ribs:

HOLMES (CONT'D)
(panting)
Irene?

Irene doesn't answer -- she has most of the timer out of the cylinder ... and sees that ANY FURTHER MOVEMENT WILL TRIGGER THE DETONATOR.

Then, CLICK! CLICK! Both of Watson's guns are empty.

FOOTSTEPS KEEP COMING. Grunting with pain, Watson picks up the NEAREST SUIT OF ARMOR, HURLS IT down the stairs, buys a little time.

A STEEL GAUNTLET falls off the armor in passing. Holmes scoops it up and --

CLANG!

-- uses the armor to KNOCK THE RAZOR OUT of Dredger's hand.

Dredger grabs Holmes and hurls him through the air. HOLMES HAMMERS INTO THE BARRELS OF EXPLOSIVE, shifting them -- and the glass cylinder.

IRENE
Please don't do that.

Dredger rushes Holmes. Holmes dives at his feet, tripping him. DREDGER HAMMERS INTO THE EXPLOSIVES --

-- nearly knocking Irene over.

<u>But also dislodging the glass cylinder</u>.

Irene braces for the explosion -- heaves a huge sigh of relief when it doesn't come.

She starts to gently coax the timer and cordite out of the cylinder. Delicacy amidst mayhem.

Watson tosses the LAST SUIT OF ARMOR DOWN the stairs.

HOLMES AND DREDGER GRAPPLE AND ROLL on the floor.

Dredger gets on top of Holmes, hammers him with thunderous blows -- once, twice, bouncing Holmes' head off the stone floor, viciously -- but not a third time as Holmes times it, twists, sends Dredger over sideways --

CLOSE UP: <u>onto his own razor, with all his weight</u>.

DREDGER HOWLS, thrusts himself up to his feet, looks down at the RAZOR THRUST TO THE HILT into his gut.

He reaches down, pulls it out, stands, gushing blood, takes one step towards Holmes, drops to his knees, drops the razor, looks at Holmes with shock and outrage --

-- and dies.

In the distance the BELLS OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL BEGIN TO CHIME NOON.

BONG! One.

WATSON
(in pain)
I need help.

WATSON PUSHES THE CEREMONIAL CANNON across the room towards the stairs --

-- where MORE THUGS are almost at the top of the stairs.

BONG! Two.

HOLMES JOINS WATSON AT THE CANNON. They launch it down the stairs --

-- where it BOWLS OVER THE REMAINING THUGS.

BONG! Three.

HOLMES
Irene?

He turns.

But IRENE IS GONE. WITH THE GLASS SPHERE.

BONG! Four.

The door to the wooden stairs is open.

The detonator lies on its side, on the barrels of explosive, trailing metal linkages to the timer.

BONG! Five.

THE DETONATOR -- whirring movement, ominous ticking -- is still armed.

BONG! Six.

Holmes and Watson step backwards, look at the door.

BONG! Seven.

Watson shakes his head.

WATSON
Not enough time.

They look back at the DETONATOR --

BONG! Eight.

-- then at the WINDOW Dredger burst in through.

No communication necessary. They lunge for the detonator, scoop it up and run for the broken window on --

BONG! Nine.

-- but the DETONATOR WON'T FIT through the jagged hole. Holmes kicks at the debris, clearing out the window as --

BONG! Ten. BONG! Eleven. The bells are one strike from noon.

They jam the detonator through the window. It just scrapes through on --

BONG! Twelve.

EXT. WHITE TOWER - DAY

IN SLO MO, THE GLASS CYLINDER FALLS towards the ground.

In mid-air --

BOOOOOOOOOOM!

The explosion hammers the White Tower --

-- and SCATTERS BLACKWOOD AND HIS FOLLOWERS like autumn leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE TOWER - DAY

The top floor sways impressively. Holmes and Watson lie collapsed on the floor next to Dredger's razor. They look at it.

WATSON
I think I'm going to grow a beard.

HOLMES
I'll join you.

Holmes leaps up and charges down the stairs. Watson tries. He can't. He's done.

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITE TOWER - DAY

Smoke, burning debris, the scattered, moaning bodies of Blackwood's followers.

Irene charges out of the White Tower with the glass sphere under her arm. She runs for Tower Bridge.

Blast-seared but very much alive, Blackwood sees her, goes after her immediately.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE THAMES RIVER - DAY

A FLOTILLA OF POLICE LAUNCHES approaches the Tower.

Lestrade stands at the bow of the lead launch, eyes wide as he watches a CLOUD OF DUST AND DEBRIS roil into the air around the Tower.

LESTRADE
Faster!

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWER BRIDGE - DAY

Irene sprints into the CONSTRUCTION SITE. She darts between piles of planks, steel, coils of rope, heads for the BRIDGE STANCHION, and a self-propelled CONSTRUCTION LIFT.

Irene hauls herself upwards, BLACKWOOD'S WEAPON nestled in her lap.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWER OF LONDON - DAY

Holmes tries to decide where Irene went. His eyes sweep towards the river, then the bridge.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOP OF TOWER BRIDGE - DAY

Irene steps onto the top of the stanchion. She pulls out a waterproof FLARE and LIGHTS IT.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWER OF LONDON - DAY

Seen through the dust from the explosion, IRENE'S FLARE GLOWS RED at the top of the stanchion.

HOLMES SPRINTS towards Tower Bridge.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE THAMES RIVER - DAY

On the horizon in the distance, the GLOW OF THE FLARE can be seen above the dust surrounding the bridge.

VOICE (V.O.)
She's got it.

An IDLING ENGINE THROTTLES UP and a POWERFUL BOAT accelerates through the frame.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWER BRIDGE - DAY

Holmes reaches the CONSTRUCTION SITE, runs for the STANCHION. He could climb -- there are LADDERS EVERYWHERE -- but that would be slow.

Holmes sees the HUGE COUNTERWEIGHT, clearly visible at ground level inside the as-yet unclad structure of the stanchion.

Holmes grabs a pick axe, darts to the BIG LEVER that frees the leaf, HAMMERS THE LOCK off it with one decisive blow, PUSHES THE LEVER all the way over --

-- sprints, jumps, lands on top of the COUNTERWEIGHT.

CUT TO:

THE MIGHTY LEAF BEGINS TO LOWER towards the Thames --

CUT TO:

-- and the COUNTERWEIGHT, WITH HOLMES ON TOP OF IT, RISES up INSIDE THE STANCHION.

Smooth, stylish, radical -- quintessential Holmes.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOP OF TOWER BRIDGE - DAY

As the counterweight comes to a stop at the top, HOLMES pulls himself into the steelwork and climbs onto the TOP OF THE STANCHION.

The light is sultry. Wind gusts strong. Weather coming in.

The top of the stanchion is not a solid surface. Massive steel girders are crisscrossed with planks and ladders. Even though roped down, planks shudder in the wind.

Precarious, exposed terrain.

Further out, precarious becomes out-and-out dangerous.

Nothing but A HUNDRED FEET OF TEMPORARY SCAFFOLDING -- PLANKS ACROSS THICK ROPE -- spans the gap between the steel, SUPPORTED from either end by the CRANES.

Which is where Holmes sees a FAMILIAR FIGURE SILHOUETTED at the swaying, shuddering middle of the bridge.

Irene.

Angry, Holmes leaps along planks and girders towards her.

And then Holmes freezes at the edge of the temporary scaffolding.

Because the shape of the silhouette has changed, grown --

-- to reveal that BLACKWOOD HAS IRENE.

He holds her from behind, his gun to her head. Blood trickles from a gash in her forehead. She looks dazed, concussed, almost unable to take her own weight.

BLACKWOOD'S WEAPON GLEAMS precariously at their feet in a nest of coiled rope.

This is an insane place to be but Blackwood doesn't seem to notice. All he wants is revenge, no matter what it costs him.

BLACKWOOD
You're just in time, detective.

Irene starts to sag. Blackwood twists her arm up her back and she gasps in pain, stands up.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
We can share her agony.

Blackwood cocks the gun.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
Ready?

HOLMES
Go ahead. You'll still be nothing more than a cheap faker with a second-rate magic act. I know how you did it.

Blackwood hesitates.

As he talks, HOLMES INCHES CLOSER and closer along the temporary scaffolding. BALANCE IS AN ISSUE for all of them, especially when the wind gusts.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
It was all trickery. The gunshot, the executioner's mask, everything. You never died.
(beat)
And you've got no more magic in your touch than I have.

Blackwood smirks.

BLACKWOOD
You're a blind man, stumbling through the darkness of your own fear.
(beat)
You can see Him too. Just open your eyes.

HOLMES
My eyes are open, Blackwood. And I see a fraud. The woman in the factory -- you had a syringe full of your weapon, hidden in your hand. You injected her.
(mocking)
You're a <u>fraud</u>.

BLACKWOOD
Am I?

Blackwood transfers his gun to his left hand, the gun barrel never leaving Irene's head, his eyes never leaving Holmes.

He opens his right hand, shows it like a magician.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
No syringe.

Alarm in Holmes' eyes as Blackwood's CARESSES Irene's face, RUBY RING SPARKLING.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
See my touch for yourself.

IRENE gasps, her knees buckle, she COLLAPSES --

-- and BLACKWOOD KICKS HER OVER THE EDGE, almost dismissively.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
She's nothing.

Timing the movement of the scaffolding, Holmes leaps at Blackwood.

BLACKWOOD gets the gun up, FIRES, but it's in the wrong hand and the scaffolding shifts under them --

-- and the SHOT GRAZES HOLMES' SIDE, knocks him sprawling onto the planking.

He has to grab on desperately to stop himself from following Irene.

As he does, BLACKWOOD SLAMS DOWN ONTO HIM knees-first, thudding any remaining breath out of him.

Winded, bleeding, shot, HOLMES IS AT BLACKWOOD'S MERCY.

Blackwood straddles him. Pushes Holmes' head down against the planking with the barrel of his gun.

BLACKWOOD
It's just you and me. As it should be. With the death you deserve.

BLACKWOOD LIFTS HIS RIGHT HAND, flexes the finger with the ruby ring, and --

CUT TO:

EXTRA CLOSE UP, a short HOLLOW NEEDLE DARTS out of the ring.

CUT TO:

BLACKWOOD reaches down and PUTS HIS RIGHT HAND on Holmes' battered cheek.

Holmes tries to buck Blackwood off.

Blackwood gun-whips him, subdues him, puts the gun back against his temple.

BLACKWOOD
He's looking forward to meeting you. He told me so himself.

Blackwood caresses Holmes' cheek.

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)
Feel my touch.

Holmes' eyes flare in pain. He spasms under Blackwood. Incredibly fast, his eyes roll back and stare sightlessly at the darkening sky.

Holmes is dead.

Blackwood exhales shakily. An intense, but satisfying, moment.

He puts his gun away, turns his head to locate his weapon in its nest of rope --

-- POW! --

Gets Holmes' hard fist across his chin.

Holmes grabs Blackwood's head, jerks his face down to meet Holmes' forehead whipping up.

-- CRUNCH --

Blackwood reels back, keening through his pulverized nose. He looks at his ring in bloody disbelief.

BLACKWOOD
Not ... possible.

HOLMES
Not possible to poison London without killing yourself and your followers -- <u>unless you had an antidote</u>.
(beat)
(MORE)

HOLMES (CONT'D)
You gave it to us yourself, back in the factory. We drank the sacrament with everyone else.

ON BLACKWOOD, as the lightning of defeat flashes in his eyes.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
All I had to do was trick you into using your ring instead of your gun.

Blackwood snatches for his gun --

-- but Holmes gets to it first. They both have their hands on the gun, when --

-- BAM!--

-- HOLMES SHOOTS BLACKWOOD point-blank through the chest, blowing him backwards onto the swaying planking, the force taking the gun with him.

Holmes rolls over, to fight his way to his feet, when --

IRENE
(from below)
Sherlock!

Still on hands and knees, Holmes looks over the edge.

HOLMES' POV: IRENE SWINGS twenty feet below at the end of a scaffolding rope.

IRENE (CONT'D)
I'm not going to able to hang on for much longer.

Biting down on the pain, HOLMES reaches down, HAULS IRENE UP. He's out of gas by the time she gets to the underside of the scaffolding. She reaches out to him.

Their hands join.

Holmes swings Irene onto the scaffolding. She tumbles onto him.

They lie there, faces close together, gasping for breath.

IRENE
Thank you.

Click!

Irene looks down to see that HOLMES HAS HANDCUFFED HER to him.

HOLMES
You're not running away this time.

Before Irene can reply, A SHOT RINGS OUT and the entire SCAFFOLDING JERKS, HARD.

They look up.

A WIDE TRAIL OF BLOOD leads along the scaffolding to Blackwood.

He lies on his back. His GLASS SPHERE is cradled under one arm. The other is raised, holding the gun. He shoots at the sky. Insane.

BAM!

AGAIN, and worse this time, the SCAFFOLD JERKS.

Which is when they realize that Blackwood isn't shooting at the sky -- he's shooting at the TOOTHED BRAKE ON THE CRANE BLOCK, through which runs the cable that holds up one end of the scaffolding.

BAM!

The CRANE BLOCK IS HIT AGAIN, the brake loses another tooth. The steel CABLE BEGINS TO SLIP, unreeling slowly. The Tower side of the SCAFFOLDING BEGINS TO TILT downwards.

Blackwood's on the scaffold. This means his death, too. He doesn't care. He raises the gun to shoot again.

HOLMES
Run.

Holmes jerks Irene to her feet and THEY RUN along the scaffold towards the other side of the bridge. (Running "uphill".)

BAM! One last shot and the CRANE BLOCK CRUMBLES.

The CABLE SCREAMS OUT.

ONE SIDE OF THE SCAFFOLDING PLUMMETS DOWNWARDS --

-- JERKING THE OTHER SIDE LOOSE from the bridge steel.

An EVER-WIDENING GAP between Holmes and Irene and safety.

Sprinting, balancing, Holmes and Irene share a quick glance, a nod --

-- and GO FOR IT.

As the entire scaffolding swings down over the Thames, THEY LEAP THE GAP ...

... fly through the air, handcuffed together ...

... LAND ON SOLID STEEL with a very welcome thud.

CUT TO:

As it swings down, the SCAFFOLDING FLIPS over.

BLACKWOOD'S WEAPON DROPS out of his arm, falls towards the lowered leaf of the Bridge below.

Blackwood reaches for it --

-- and JERKS TO A STOP, choked by the ROPE TANGLED AROUND HIS NECK.

CUT TO:

FOLLOW THE WEAPON down ... down ...

... down to lethal impact on the bridge leaf ...

... which it <u>just</u> misses, plunging instead into the Thames with a neat splash.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE THAMES RIVER - DAY

After a long moment, the GLASS SPHERE BOBS UP and begins floating towards the sea.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWER BRIDGE - DAY

An ARMY OF BOBBIES scales the stanchion across the river from the Tower of London.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOP OF TOWER BRIDGE - DAY

ON THE TOP, Holmes and Irene only manage to stay upright by leaning against each other. It looks quite romantic, with London spread out beneath them.

HOLMES
Beautiful day.

IRENE
In a beautiful city.

Homes nods dreamily.

IRENE (CONT'D)
Sherlock, let me go.

They're STILL HANDCUFFED TOGETHER. Holmes looks at the cuffs for a moment, then at Irene.

HOLMES
Who are you working for?

IRENE
He's called the Professor. That's all I know -- except that he pays well.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE THAMES RIVER - DAY

The GLASS SPHERE drifts down river, glinting in the sunlight. Beyond it, we see the bow wave of an APPROACHING LAUNCH.

EXT. LAUNCH - DAY

On the prow of the launch stands a man dressed in black, with cane and top hat. (MORIARTY.)

MORIARTY
Close as you can.

HELMSMAN
Yes, Professor.

They close in on the glass sphere --

-- but are CUT OFF BY A SPEEDING POLICE LAUNCH.

EXT. POLICE LAUNCH - DAY

Lestrade looks on as WATSON LEANS OVER WITH A DIP NET -- scoops up the sphere (with a wince) brings it on board.

They examine it. The SURFACE IS FILIGREED WITH CRACKS, some quite alarming --

-- but the clear powder is still safely inside.

Watson and Lestrade share a look of relief -- that was close.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAUNCH - DAY

Disgusted, Moriarty turns away from the railing.

MORIARTY
(to helmsman)
Take us away.

The launch turns hard and heads down river.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOP OF TOWER BRIDGE - DAY

Irene rattles the cuffs.

IRENE (CONT'D)
Sherlock, I saved your life.

HOLMES
I'd say we're more than even on that score.

Holmes looks over Irene's shoulder.

BOBBIES swarm onto the top of the stanchion, lead by a BEEFY SERGEANT.

IRENE
Look into your heart. Is this really what you want?

HOLMES
Probably not.

Holmes finds the key, UNLOCKS THE CUFF around his <u>own</u> wrist. Irene gives him a triumphant little smile, waiting for him to unlock her cuff.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
Look me up when you get out.

He hands his cuff over to the beefy sergeant.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
She's tricky, treacherous and dangerous. Be careful.

BEEFY SERGEANT
My middle name, sir.

Click! The open cuff closes over the beefy sergeant's wrist.

Irene gives Holmes a look that promises lots and lots of future trouble.

Holmes grins, welcoming it --

HOLMES
Goodbye, Irene.

-- and turns his back to look out at London as Irene is lead away.

As he is bandaged by a POLICE MEDIC, Holmes drinks in the city he just saved, in all its glory.

PULL BACK, to show Holmes standing tall and proud in the wind at the top of Tower Bridge --

-- as, below, BLACKWOOD SWINGS over the Thames at the end of a tangle of rope, dangling from the collapsed scaffold.

Hanged like a common man after all, with Tower Bridge as his gibbet.

PULL BACK FROM THIS GRUESOME SIGHT --

-- PULL AWAY UP RIVER, faster and faster, until we --

-- ZERO IN ON THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, WHERE --

EXT. HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT - DAY

-- THE QUEEN'S COACH AND ESCORT head safely away from Parliament, back to Buckingham Palace.

Crisis over.

FADE TO:

EXT. SCOTLAND YARD - END OF THE DAY

Gunshot wound bandaged, cuts cleaned, Holmes walks out through Scotland Yard with Lestrade and Watson, holding his violin.

LESTRADE
I still don't understand how Blackwood faked his own execution.

HOLMES
I had trouble with that one myself. The two officials at his execution were members of the Order of the Golden Bough ...

IMAGE FLASHES -- the two POMPOUS-LOOKING OFFICIALS push Blackwood's head onto the block...

HOLMES
... were part of his cult. They helped him change places ...

-- the first Official grabs the top of the EXECUTIONER'S SLEEVELESS MASK/TUNIC --

HOLMES (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... with the only man there wearing a mask ...

-- BLACKWOOD'S RING scrapes the ankle of the EXECUTIONER, his legs buckling --

HOLMES (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... While we ...

-- A GUNSHOT RINGS OUT; the sounds of panic --

HOLMES (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... were looking somewhere else.

-- Blackwood stands as the Executioner falls, his head rising smoothly into the suspended mask/tunic...

Lestrade is still having trouble absorbing it.

LESTRADE
I was looking straight at him.

HOLMES
No you weren't. Instinct, Lestrade. When a gun fires, you look to see where the danger is. And that's what everyone in the crowd did. Including me and Watson.

Lestrade shakes his head -- then sees something across the room that brings him up short. The BEEFY SERGEANT approaches, puce with shame.

LESTRADE
What is it, Sergeant?

BEEFY SERGEANT
Begging your pardon, Inspector --
it's the woman.

ON HOLMES AND WATSON, as they exchange a wry and unsurprised look.

FADE TO:

INT. 221 BAKER STREET - EVENING

HOLMES
Have you got the ring?

WATSON
Of course.

Both men sport a COUPLE OF DAYS WORTH OF STUBBLE. Neither of them has been anywhere near a razor.

HOLMES
Show me.

Watson gives Holmes a sheepish look, fumbles a small box out of his pocket, flips it open to reveal a ring with a microscopic diamond.

WATSON
It's all I can afford, until --

HOLMES
-- until your practice is up and running. May I?

Holmes reaches for the ring. Watson lets him take it out of the box. Then, Holmes replaces it with another. This is a STUNNING RING WITH A HUGE, FLAWLESS PINK DIAMOND.

HOLMES
The King of Bohemia gave it to me.

WATSON
I couldn't possibly.

HOLMES
Watson -- <u>I'll never use it</u>.
Ever. We both know that.

Before Watson can argue any further, there is a knock at the door.

HOLMES
Here she is.

WATSON
(still on the ring)
Holmes --

Holmes closes the ring box emphatically.

HOLMES
She deserves it.
(leaving)
I'll let her in on my way out.

Holmes opens the door. Mary, looking stunning, holds a green HARROD'S PACKET.

MARY
(entering)
I have something for you.
(at Holmes)
Both of you.

Mary pulls two identical wrapped boxes from the Harrod's packet, hands them to each man.

WATSON
What is it?

HOLMES
Wait. I'll tell you --

Holmes begins the process of deducing what's in the box. Watson clears his throat. Holmes looks up -- realizes that this is not the time and place.

So, for once, Holmes opens the box like a normal human being -- and pulls out a small metal and ivory device shaped something like a T. Neither he nor Watson have any idea what it is.

MARY
It's from America. A new invention.
(beat)
It's called a safety razor. You can shave without seeing a blade.

Both men rub their itchy stubble.

HOLMES
Thank you, Mary.

Holmes puts the razor aside. He'll use it if he feels like it. He shoots Watson a sly nod -- welcome to domesticity.

HOLMES (CONT'D)
Let me know how it feels. The safety razor, that is.

Holmes leaves. The moment the door clicks closed, Watson and Mary look into each other's eyes.

WATSON
Mary ...

MARY
Yes?

EXT. 221 BAKER STREET - NIGHT

Holmes emerges from his home, pauses at the bottom of the steps. Looks left, looks right, deciding which way to go. The night is alive, London is alive.

His London.

Holmes turns right, and strides off alone down Baker Street in search of entertainment, or trouble, or both.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END